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Vol. X

OCTOBER 1984

No. 4

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EDITOR : K. S. MAHADEVAN

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Kshetragna Padams

By

KALAPRAVEENA Dr. Manchala Jagannatha Rao, D. Litt.,

(Producer Emeritus, A. I. R., Doordarshan.)

Like the origin of mighty rivers, details of the birth, living, and attainment of eternal bliss of the great composer Kshetragna is enveloped in darkness. Posterity could only get glimpses of his meteoric life pieced together through his compositions by ardent lovers of music like the late Prof. Vissa Appa Rao. Besides, the surmised history of Kshetragna given in the book *KSHETRAGNA PADAMULU*, Professor Appa Rao's paper on Kshetragna read at the Madras Music Academy on 30th September 1950 gives a lucid picture of the life of Kshetragna.

A Cultural Centre

The original name of Kshetragna was Muvva Varadayya. He lived in a tract of country which was the seat of ancient learning and culture on the banks of the river Krishna. Srikakulam, the abode of the deity Andhra Vishnu and the village Ghantasala, both famous in history for nearly two thousand years, are only a few miles from Muvva, the birth place of Kshetragna. Kuchipudi village which was famous even before the 15th century for its music, alankara sastra, abhinaya, natya and nataka, particularly the Parijata Nataka, is very near Muvva. Varadayya must have studied in some of these places in the old gurukula tradition Sanskrit and Telugu literature and language and must have learnt music, dancing, abhinaya and alan-

kara sastra. His padams afford clear evidence of his versatility and grasp of the rich ancient culture in all its aspects.

Varadayya in Love

Probably, during the period of his studies, Varadayya would have been acquainted with some devadasi, a fellow student and this acquaintance must have grown with years into ardent love for her. The young couple must have enjoyed life to their hearts' content for sometime. They must have frequented the temple of Gopaswamy at Muvva and worshipped the god. It may have occurred to them that it would be worth while to compose padams dedicated to Muvva Gopala. Varadayya's mistress must have persuaded him to compose Padams. Varadayya must have undertaken the task and after some days of struggle and effort, meditating all the time in the temple without caring for food or sleep, must have burst out into song in praise of Muvva Gopala. Tradition has handed down stories to this effect.

First Padam

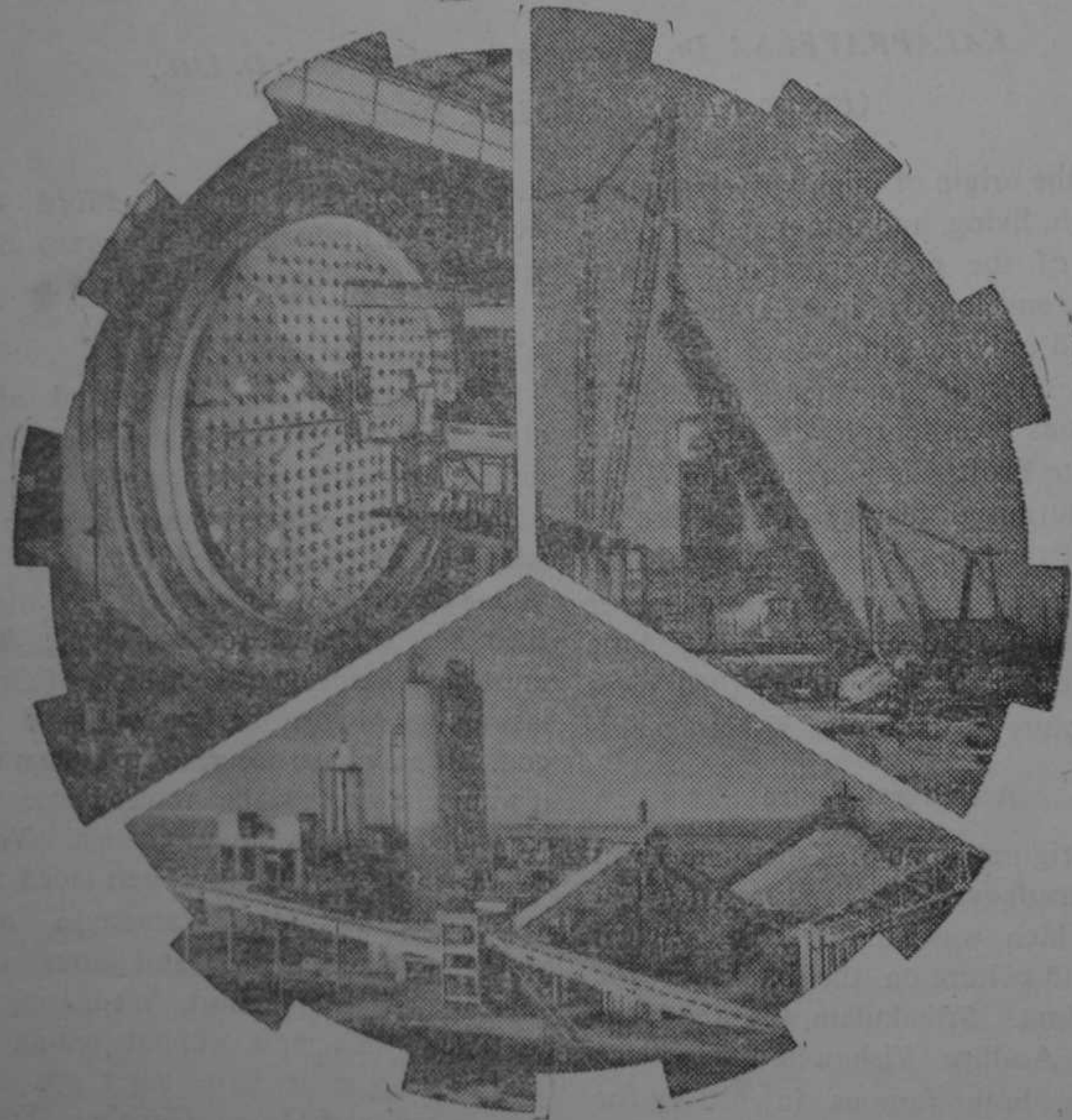
And the following is said to be the first padam he composed :

"Sripati Sutubariki nenopaleka ninu
Vedite! . . .

Kopala Muvva Gopala"

(in *Ananda Bhairavi*.)

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Quite in accordance with poetic convention, this, the first song, begins with the letter 'Sri' and the padam is unlike all other padams, which as a rule contain three charanams, each containing four lines, besides pallavi and anupallavi. This padam contains a single line for all the five charanams and it indicates that it is probably his maiden attempt.

Love Sublimated

Varadaya and his beloved must have been engrossed in this new experience, composing and dancing new padams together. Such experience would naturally produce a great change in the attitude towards life and must have therefore changed them gradually into great bhaktas of Muvva Gopala. After some time, he must have had the desire to travel far and wide, worship the gods enshrined in the famous temples of the land and probably distinguish himself in the durbars of Tanjore, Madura etc.,

Except for a few padas in which the kings were addressed as Nayakas, rest of the Padams were attributed to Muvva Gopala as Nayaka, with the Mudra as Muvva Gopala. Venugopalswamy Temple in the village Muvva was 500 years older to Kshetragna's period and there are still some descendants of Kshetragna's family living in that area; hence, Kshetragna's native place could be stated as Muvva in Krishna District.

The Tanjore Court

Madurai Tirumala Nayaka ruled between 1623-1659 AD., Vijaya Raghava Nayaka of Tanjore ruled between 1633-1673 A.D and Abdullah Kutubshah

of Golkonda ruled between 1620-1672 A.D. From these historical details it can be surmised that Kshetragna would have gone to Tanjore court round about 1630 A.D when he would have been about 30 years old and by the time he visited Golkonda he would have reached the ripe age of 60 to 70.

Though Kshetragna himself excelled in composing Padams, it cannot be denied that the influence of Annamacharya is marked in the matter of Telugu usage, manner of conveying of ideas, selecting incidents, depicting the natural moods of different Nayakas and Nayikas. Some scholars say that even Purandaradasa's influence could also be felt in Kshetragna Padams.

"Rasamanjari"

Bhanu Datta who hails from the Telengana region of Andhra wrote *Rasamanjari*, a treatise in Sanskrit in 15th century and a Telugu translation of the same *Sringara Rasamanjari* emerged much later than Kshetragna. It is very interesting to note that illustrations in the above commentary are furnished by Kshetragna Padams. But it does not follow that Kshetragna deliberately composed his padams to give lakshya for lakshana in the original. Apart from "Rasamanjari" there are a number of well known treatises which deal with different types of Nayika and Nayaka and it is not unlikely that Kshetragna studied several of them.

Elusive Greatness

Many artists are singing padams. Dancers are interpreting padams through abhinaya and scholars are writing commen-

aries on padams. However much is done in this regard, it is still doubtful whether the full greatness of the subject could be grasped and expounded by anybody. It is as difficult as to describe the all pervading Supreme Being 'Avangmanasagochara'. To some extent it is possible to create Rakti in kriti, kirtana and other forms of musical compositions with the aid of well knit text and musical embellishments, but to unfold the beauties of Kshetragna padams, some inexplicable things besides the above are essential. One should assimilate these things, enjoy oneself and then only one can appreciate their true beauty and character.

Types of Padams

It is interesting to note that there are two distinct categories of Padams composed by Kshetragna : namely, Aata Padams and Abhinaya Padams. The natural abhinaya underlined in every line of the text is portrayed in vivid sound picture of the song in every one of these Abhinaya Padams. Some of the lines in these padams are so well-knit literally and musically that they can be repeated over and over again giving expression to different moods.

Ata Padams

Likewise, the Ata Padams are replete with action. Every word and line in the padam indicates some gesture or action and the music is also blended in such subtle phrases that the action seems to be a natural outcome. The swara patterns in Ata Padams are in madhyamakala as if to express action. Perhaps, during the course of time, these Ata Padams became transformed into Javalis.

The Padam is not like any other musical composition for simple rendering. Natya, Abhinaya, are implied in the Padam. The laya aspect of a Padam is very difficult because of the fact that all the three aspects of music, dance and abhinaya are to be coordinated in one span.

Changing Nomenclature

Today, we have lost the distinction of Kriti and Kirtana, and during the efflux of time, several such names lost their real meaning. Geetam originally meant that which is sung. Today it is restricted to the Pillari Geetams taught to children in the initial stages of teaching music. Similarly, every song that could be sung was called Padam in olden days. During the Tallapakam period - that is, a hundred years prior to Kshetragna, we find different kinds of padams like Sringeri Padams, Vairagya Padams, Tummeda Padams, Vennela Padams etc. It is an undisputed fact that Kshetragna drew inspiration from Saint Composers Annamacharya and Purandaradasa, in developing Sringeri padam to its pinnacle of glory embedding them with riches of music, abhinaya and natya.

Chapu Tala Favoured

Another notable aspect we find in Kshetragna Padams is that the seven beats Triputa or chapu tala is used in most of the compositions and Adi tala, Rupaka Tala and Jhampatala are rarely used. There are some Aata Padams in Tisrajati Eka tala. When singing in vilambakala Triputa tala, 28 matras revolve in every avarta at the rate of four for each of the seven beats. In this cycle of 28 matras, we can get Trisra 3 + Chaturasra 4 + Khanda 5 + Misra 7 + Sankirna 9. Thus

we see that all the five varieties of Jatis are latent in Triputa tala when sung in vilamba kala and there is no other tala which could offer this facility with ease. Some old authors while printing padams gave the raga name and mentioned the tala as Ata Tala, which means Khandajati. This will be equivalent to two avartanamams of Chapu Tala.

Jhampa tala is still understood as Kurujhampa in some regions. That is splitting the 10 beats in Misrajati Jhampa

into two five beat cycles. Similarly, Chapu tala is nothing but increasing the pace of Tisrajati Triputatala and showing it as 3 + 4 beats.

Kshetragna Non Pareil

No amount of writing or lecturing can reveal the greatness of this great art form. One should listen to padams sung, and see them danced to; and only then could one derive the full enjoyment of Padams and discern their truly exciting charm.

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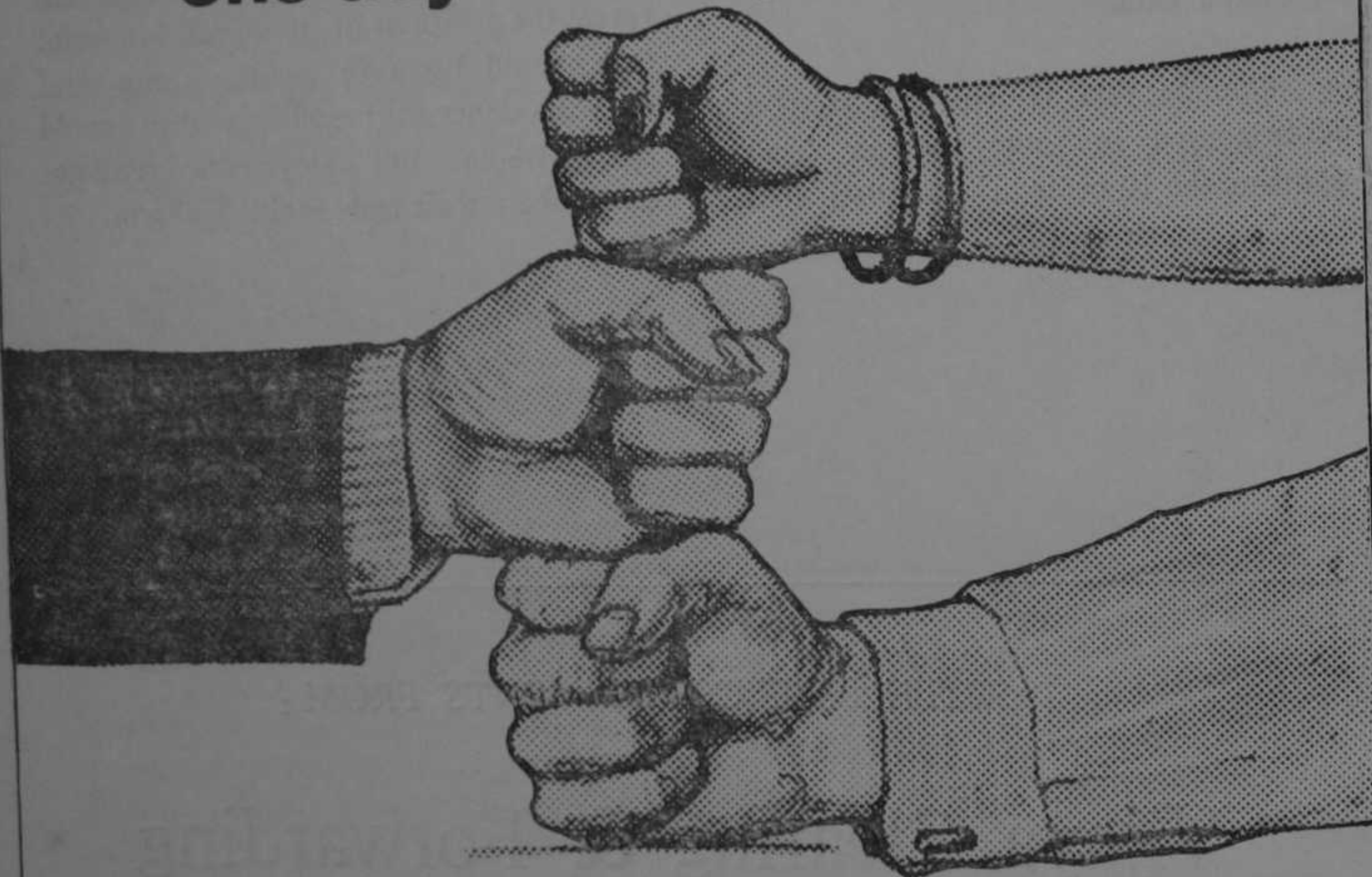


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The Riddle of Kshetrajna - A Fresh Look

By

T. S. PARTHASARATHY

The first publication in which the padams of Kshetrajna appear in print is the 'Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangrahamu' compiled by one Tirunagari Vina Ramanujayya and published in the Telugu script in 1859 under the patronage of Suri Chetty Govindaraja Chetty of Madras. This book is perhaps the first of its kind as no earlier printed book on music has been traced so far. The texts of 21 padams of Kshetrajna have been reproduced in this publication but no notation. Strangely enough, only two of these padams are in vogue today, 'Evvade nenu' in Sankarabharanam and 'Vedukato' in Devagandhari. The raga of the latter is shown in the above book as Yadukulakambhoji and not as Devagandhari! There were editions of only the text in 1862, 1874, 1877 and 1894.

The 'Ganendu Sekharamu' published in 1912 by order of His Highness The Maharaja of Mysore by Tachur Singaracharyulu Brothers contains some padams with notation, including those of Kshetrajna and Muvvalur Sabhapatayya; and of these only 'Ayyayyo' in Nadanamakriya (Payyeda) is in vogue now. The padam 'Ososi' (Kasiki poyyene) in Mukhari does not appear to be Kshetrajna's.

Conflicting Evidence

In 1916, Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu and Sons, Madras, published the bare texts of 199 padams of Kshetrajna with a note of warning viz., 'For private circula-

tion only'. This caution was as necessary because, like the Gita Govinda in West Bengal, the padams were not considered 'respectable' early this century. The title of the book is 'Kshetraya padamulu - Sri Muvva Gopalankitamulu'. It is significant that the padam 'Vedukato', in which Kshetrajna is believed to have enumerated the 4500 padams composed by him in different places, is not found in this book. Besides, the ragas of several padams mentioned here differ from the ragas now in vogue. The raga of 'Valapu dacha' is shown as Pantuvarali (and not Varali) and that of 'Iddari valane' as Saurashtram (and not Begada). The raga of 'Kualaya-kshiro' is given as Pantuvaraali (and not Gaulipantu). There are many more examples of this nature, which show that the ragas of the padams have been undergoing changes from time to time.

Subbarama Dikshitar's Assessment

It is common knowledge that the 'Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini' (1904) of Subbarama Dikshitar is the most magnificent Thesaurus of Karnatic music of the 20th century. In his *magnum opus*, Dikshitar has furnished a brief life sketch of Kshetrajna (whom he calls as Kshetragnulu and not as Kshetrayya) which is summarized below :

"He was a Trilinga Brahmin and his native place was Muvvapuri. He was a scholar in Telugu and an

adept in music and composing sahitya. When he was a boy, he received initiation into the Gopala Mula Mantra from a Yogi which he recited for a long time in the local shrine of Lord Krishna. The Lord appeared before him and with His blessings, Kshetragna commenced his career as a composer with the padam 'Sripati sutu bariki'. He later visited the courts of the Rulers of Madurai, Thanjavur, Golkonda etc., and composed a large number of padams which he enumerates in his song 'Vedukato'. At the request of Vijayaraghava Nayak of Thanjavur he composed a pancharatnam with the Ruler's name as the mudra. (In fact there are 11 padams in which the name of Vijayaraghava Nayak is found) Most of the padams have the mudra 'Muvva gopala' but some padams have the mudras 'Kanchi Varadudu' and 'Chevvandi Lingadu' in addition to 'Muvva gopala'.

Some musicians in the court of Vijayaraghava became jealous of Kshetragna as he was the ruler's favourite and they carried tales against the poet. Kshetragna put them to shame by composing part of a padam which they could not complete for months."

The most interesting part of this sketch by Dikshitar is that he says that he had an old book which contained 500 padams of Kshetragna! He also bitterly complains that in later editions the sahitya of many padams had been tampered with

and ignorant musicians of his time had changed the ragas also.

Subbarama Dikshitar is a well-informed and careful editor and writer but in the case of Kshetragna he does not attempt the location of Muvvapuri probably because he was not sure of it. It is also clear that the practice of changing the ragas of padams was rampant even in his time despite senior Vidwans frowning at what they thought was sacrilege.

Place of Birth - Differing Versions

The late Kirtanacharya C. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar wrote, in the Illustrated Weekly of the Hindu during the years 1929-1931, a series of articles on the subject of dance which are worth their weight in gold. These were compiled and published in book form in 1948 by the Blaze Publications, Madras, under the title 'Indian Dance'. In his article on Kshetragna the Kirtanacharya says: "This Kshetragna was a Telugu Brahmana of a place named Moovapura, North Arcot District, Madras Presidency".

This statement was certainly not a figment of his imagination but presumably based on some version current in his time. Prof. P. Sambamoorthy later stated in his books that Muvvapuri was in the Chandragiri Taluk of the Chittoor District. Thus, the tradition in the Tamilnadu area, where Kshetragna composed thousands of his padams, was that he belonged to some area near Chittoor. The fact that composers like Sarangapani, Govindasamayya and Kuvanasamayya were patronized by Venkata Perumal Raju, the Zamindar of Karvetinagaram near Puttur (Chittoor District) must have added force to the argument that Kshetragna belonged to that region.

Around 1922 Sri Veturi Prabhakara Sastri, Reader in Telugu of the Sri Venkatesvara Oriental Institute, Tirupati, stated in an article in 'Bharati' that "people say that the author of the Muvva Gopala padams belonged to the village called Movva in the Krishna District". Sastri did not elaborate further and his article was obviously not taken note of by Tamil musicologists who wrote on Kshetragna.

Prof. Vissa Appa Rao's Conclusions

Prof. Vissa Appa Rao read a long paper on Kshetragna at the Madras Music Academy on 30th September 1950 in which he gave certain conclusions regarding the place of birth and the life of the composer. In the same year, he wrote a long introduction to the book 'Kshetragna padamulu' (with Sringeri Rasamanjari) published by the Andhra Gana Kala Parishat, Rajahmundry, in which he further elaborated his findings listed in his talk at the Music Academy. His conclusions were:

1) Kshetragna was born in the village Muvva (also spelt as Movva and Mavva) and his original name was Muvva Varadayya.

2) He left for Tanjore after composing padams on Muvva Gopala, the local deity, and never returned home.

3) He was intimate with a young girl, a devadasi, whose fate, after he left Muvva, was not known.

With these conjectures as the basis, the Professor quoted a large number of Kshetragna padams to illustrate the pangs of separation of the composer as well as

of his so-called beloved. He also described with gusto a supposedly traditional account according to which Kshetragna found himself locked inside the Varadaraja temple at Kanchi and witnessed at dawn the Goddess coming out of the Lord's shrine and proceeding to Her temple. The padam 'Maguva tana kelike' came in handy for this imaginary projection.

Prof. Rao visited the village of Muvva and published in his book the photograph of five men who were stated to be the descendants of Kshetragna. He also published the rear view of an idol in which the word Mavva had been inscribed. Such an inscription is not found on any idol in South India.

A Gallant

It is surprising that even a discerning scholar like Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma wrote that Kshetragna himself was a 'Vitaraya' or a gallant and that he has mentioned this in his padam 'Vedukato'. The Devadasi anecdote was further elaborated by Sarma almost like the scenario for a motion picture. Film producers were not going to let such a good story go unfiled and recently the love story of Kshetragna was transferred to the celluloid.

Manchala Jagannatha Rao's Work

In 1954 the Andhra Gana Kala Parishad, Rajahmundry, came out with another publication with the title 'Padams of Kshetragna in Notation - as given by Manchala Jagannatha Rao'. This time the book was edited by Sangita Kalanidhi T.V. Subba Rao. The ragas and tunes furnished in this book were at variance with the versions current in the Tamilnadu area. Sri Manchala Jagannatha Rao claimed in his introduction that he wrote down the

versions in notation from an old man (name not given) when the former was residing at Salem around the year 1936. His statement was difficult to accept even by his own friends who advised him not to publish the versions. Finally Sri T. V. Subba Rao was requested to scrutinize the notation and he was compelled to make some corrections before he gave his consent for his name to appear as the Editor. About 43 of the padams were being published in notation for the first time and a somewhat puzzled Subba Rao wrote "I have not, however, chosen to alter them as they also seemed to represent another tradition".

Rajanikanta Rao's Contribution

The Kshetrajna story thus went on snowballing. In 1973 the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, published a monograph on Kshetrajna written by B. Rajanikanta Rao in the series 'Makers of Indian Literature'. Rajani is a very knowledgeable writer and had studied all the available writings on Kshetrajna before embarking on his English monograph. He has also included in his book eminently readable translations of a number of padams, a bibliography and a glossary of proper names and technical terms of literary import.

But the temptation to highlight the imaginary love episode in Kshetrajna's life was too overpowering to be resisted. The Devadasi had to be given a name and she was christened Mohanangi. Hearsay tradition also gave the name of Rukmini to Kshetrajna's wedded wife. But, unfortunately, in Rajani's otherwise excellent monograph, we find too many conjectures

and many statements commencing with the words 'must have been' or 'should have been'.

The Riddle Wrapped in Mystery

When one wades through this mass of information about Kshetrajna, one finds that some vital questions have been left unanswered or have been answered in a roundabout manner. These questions are :

1) Was Muvva in the Krishna District the birth place of Kshetrajna? While the earlier writers tried to place him in the North Arcot District of Tamilnadu or in the Chandragiri Taluk, later writers laid stress on the word Muvva occurring in the mudra 'Muvva Gopala' and gathered evidence to support their theory that Muvva was his birth place. The final word is yet to be said on this point because of the following :

(a) The phrase, 'Muvva Gopala' has been used by Timmakka, the first wife of Tallapakkam Annamacharya in her 'Subhadra Kalyanam' in the following lines :

Pundarikakshuda - Purushottamuda
Muravairi vandita- Muvva Gopala

It appears to be a stock phrase like 'Bala Gopala', 'Navanita Chora' and 'Kaliya Mardana'.

Sri Arudra, the renowned Telugu litterateur and poet, however, says that the Subhadra Kalyanam is not the work of Timmakka but of a male writer. Anyhow, the phrase Muvva Gopala is there.

b) Kshetrajna nowhere makes any mention of the Krishna District in his padams and no manuscripts of his padams have been found in that District. The Kuchipudi style of dancing does not employ Kshetrajna padams while it freely employs the Tarangams of Narayana Tirtha and sabdams of Melattur Kashinathayya, both of whom were Andhras settled down in Tamilnadu. The practice of singing Kshetrajna padams in concerts and performing abhinaya for them in dance performances also originated in the Tamil-speaking areas. Kshetrajna nowhere mentions that he composed padams for being sung in dance performances.

Sri Arudra, in his monumental work, 'Samagra Andhra Sabityam' has gone into this question in great detail and has located no less than six villages in Tamilnadu which have like-sounding names like Movuru, Muvalur, Muvvanallur etc. He is also of the opinion that Kshetrajna was not a native of the Krishna District.

2) Was Kshetrajna a music composer (vageyakara) like Tyagaraja, Dikshitar, Syama Sastri and others or a mere lyric writer who left his padams for others to fill up the music? His padam 'Vedukato' mentions that he composed a total of 4500 padams in the courts of Madura Tirumala Nayak, Tanjore Vijayaraghava Nayak and Golkonda Badshah Abdulla Kutubbsha. Does it mean that they represented 4500 different tunes with the like-

lihood of many of them being in the same raga? How is it that only about 350 have been traced so far and the ragas employed do not exceed 40? Surely 1500 padams composed in 40 days cannot all be musical forms!

We do not know anything about the musical background of Kshetrajna. We do not know who his guru or gurus were and whether he underwent regular training in music. The padam 'Vedukato' is not found in the Vavilla edition and in later editions, different versions are found. The anupallavi of this padam defies all attempts at a correct translation. In this padam, Kshetrajna does not mention about the music of his songs and it would appear that the rulers enjoyed only the sahitya. Kshetrajna was a wandering minstrel and could not have had a sishya parampara. It is no wonder, therefore, that all traces of the original music of the padams have been lost to us. As with the songs of Annamacharya and Purandara Dasa, tunes must have been invented later.

3) Was Tyagaraja acquainted with the padams of Kshetrajna or did the puritan in him reject them as erotic songs? Of course, Tyagaraja does not include Kshetrajna in his list of devotees given at the beginning of the 'Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam' but mentions Narayana Tirtha, Two kritis in the above music-drama show that Tyagaraja was not only familiar with the padams but also chose to copy the language and ideas of Kshetrajna:

Kshetrajna

Ghantaravamu

Adi

“Atte yundevu sumi na pranana
Atte yandunda kindu vachheda nani
Vana bettitini sumi na pranana!”

Tyagaraja

Pantuvarali

Tripata

“Andundakane vega vacchedanani napai
Nana betti pora”.

Kshetrajna

Ghantaravamu

Adi

“Intalo ni vidarakunte kanniru Kaveti kaluva sumi
Vanajaksha nividaku vacchedaka tala-
Vakile yillu sumi na pranana!”

Tyagaraja

Pantuvarali

Tripata

“Kanavalenanu vela lekunna kanniru
Kaluvaga parune
Inakuladhipa nivu tamasamaite
nillu vakili youne Oh Raghava!”

The Dhanam Family's immense contribution

There can be no two opinions that the present popularity of Kshetrajna padams in the music field is mostly due to the efforts of Vina Dhanammal and members of her family. A stage has been reached when connoisseurs of padams cannot tolerate any other versions of the padams or even the slightest departure from the Dhanam family's version. T. V. Subba Rao, in his preface to the Manchala edition of the padams says: “Apart from a few singers scattered over remote parts of South India, Vina Dhanam and her family have been the best exponents of them. Their rendering used to be so full of grace, delicacy and sweetness that it captured the imagination of the foremost vidvans.

Popularized in the concerts by one of the best singers then as now, the pada has been steadily gaining in aesthetic appeal”.

T. Sankaran, grandson of Vina Dhanammal, says that his grandmother learnt padams from one Padam Balakrishna Das (known as Baldas) who was a disciple of Vina Gauri Ammal of Mylapore. He does not say who composed the tunes now in vogue but there is no doubt that whoever composed the music was a genius who fully understood the mood and the setting of each padam and its literary merit.

Kshetrajna Padams in Abhinaya

Apart from the concert dais, the padams of Kshetrajna make excellent pieces for performing abhinaya

in the post-interval sessions of Bharata Natya recitals. In fact, a Telugu work called ‘Sringara Rasa Manjari’ by an unknown author quotes many padams as lakshyas for nayaka-nayika differences and most of these padams are Kshetrajna's. This work is a Telugu translation of the Sanskrit treatise ‘Rasamanjari’ by Bhanudatta Misra (circa 1500) who had the appellation of ‘Kavi Ratna’. Prof. Vissa Appa Rao has placed the music world in his debt by publishing the ‘Sringara Rasamanjari’ in his edition of Kshetrajna padams.

The Peerless Composer

Like Kalidasa in Sanskrit literature, Kshetrajna reigns supreme in the field of composing padams; but what is the real name of this immortal Telugu bard? Muvva Varadayya is only a guess! He is

called Kshetrajna by the Tamils and Kshetrayya by the Andhras. The Sanskrit term ‘Kshetrajna’ has a large number of widely differing meanings from ‘supreme soul’ to a ‘libertine’. Andhras called him Kshetrayya because he has sung on the deities of about 18 Kshetras situated mostly in Tamilnadu in the Chittoor and Kadappa districts of Andhra Pradesh. In the 1862 edition of his padams he is called ‘Parama bhagavata sikhmani’.

Legends and fables hide the true Kshetrajna like the morning mist. It is high time that some more research is undertaken and a definitive version of his life and work produced. In the meanwhile, his admirers, who are legion, will continue to salute the peerless composer of padams who leaves his compeers miles behind him.

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Kshethrayya Padhams : A Listener's View

By

E. N. PURUSHOTHAMAN

This is only a listener's view of Kshethrayya Padhams, a listener who is an alien to the esoteric/elite who are well versed in music.

Kshethrayya Padhams are not accorded their proper place in our music today. I wonder whether they were accorded their proper place at any time in our traditional music concerts. Surely they should have been accorded a high place in the dances and dance-dramas till the recent times. Otherwise, they could not have survived to our own times in such pristine purity. I have not seen any great musician giving any importance to Kshethrayya Padhams during these five decades and more, with the exception of Brindha, Muktha and Balasaraswathi who had made a name for singing Padhams. Even they used to sing only about two Padhams towards the end. Nobody ever gave separate concerts of Thevaram and Thiruppugaz which Vellore Appadorai Achari used to give. Therefore, my knowledge of Kshethrayya Padhams was very casual and very peripheral till the turn of the sixties. It would be the same with all laymen like me. Thus we are losing many precious things.

Singers' Reluctance

One of the reasons for the declension of Padhams is the reluctance of our singers, particularly the fair species, to sing them

in the open. This is quite understandable. There are indeed passages in Kshethrayya Padhams which anybody, man or woman, would blush to sing on a platform. But can we dispense with Sringara rasa altogether? I remember to have read in some Alankara Sasthra that Sringara rasa was the first and foremost of all the rasas. One great scholar opined that because there was no bhakthi rasa among the nava rasas, poets and composers had freely used Sringara rasa as a substitute. I consider this as a superficial observation. The source of this motif, Sringara rasa, would be lying hidden some-where in the recesses of our ancient culture. Only a "nadhayogi" can trace this source. How can a literary scholar find it? He cannot.

Sringara Rasa

Sringara Rasa has certainly played its part in the spiritual adventure of the human soul down the ages. The very fountain head of Bhakthi, the great Bhagavatha, abounds with it in the Rasacreeda staged on the green meadows of Brindavan amidst exhilarating sylvan surroundings. When Krishna admonished the Gopikas to go back to their homes and serve their kith and kin, the Gopikas retorted that as they were serving the Universal soul itself at Brindavan, they were at the same time serving the individual souls also in their

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homes. in the form of mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, children etc. No need to serve them separately, they said.

There is an abundance of Sringara rasa in Tamil literature, in the outpourings of Alwars and Nayanmars. The Thirupavai is supreme among these devotional lyrics. There is an amazing similarity between Kodhainayaki and Kshethrayya, as both of them are believed to have finally merged with their Lords, Ranganayaka and Muvva Gopala. That is why I have singled her out from among so many of them. Her thirty *paasurams* are immortal pieces and a perennial source of inspiration. When we hear those *paasurams* recited with correct intonations and inflexions, we are submerged in Bhakthi rasa. Sringara rasa vanishes. That is the glory of Kodhainayaki, more popularly known as Andal.

Another reason why Kshethrayya Padhams have not become so popular is, they are very difficult to sing. They call for great maturity of mind and great maturity of music. Some years ago the A.I.R. prepared a special programme of Kshethrayya Padhams in which some outstanding singers took part. It was on hearing this programme that I realised how difficult it is even for seasoned singers to attain perfection in them. Now let us see a few gems of Kshethrayya.

Sankarabharanam

‘Evvade vaadu nenu pavvalinchina vela Puvvu baanamu vesi ravvajesi poye’:

Who is that fellow, who shot a floral arrow at me, while I was on my couch and fled, leaving a trail of scandal behind him?

I consider Sankarabharanam as the king of ragas. It has not only ‘gaambheeryam’ but also ‘soundharyam’: majesty as well as beauty. The very first influence on me was Thiruveezhimalai Brothers’ rendering of *Swararagasudha* with Needaamangalam Meenakshisundaram Pillai on the Thavil. Like any one of you, I have heard so many Sankarabharanams all these years. But in these two lines of Kshethrayya, which portray the dignity of his offended nayika, Sankarabharanam stands out in sheer magnificence. There is something regal in the way in which the nayika questions about the impudent intruder on the portals of her womanly virtue. ‘Pavvalinchina’ is a lovely word and it is made lovelier by a fine combination of chaste sangathis and sumptuous gamakas. Generally, *ravva* means *allari*: disturbance or commotion. Occasionally, it also means disrepute. In view of the still worse incidents narrated by the nayika in the succeeding charanams, I have translated it as scandal. ‘All the people in the street are enjoying the fun at my expense’, says the nayika. No doubt there is commotion also in her mental condition.

Mukhari.

‘Naa manasu vantidhe nee manasai-the naa

Nomu phala meederura, adhigaaka Vemaaru cherakuna pandu pandi-nayatlu

Veduka enumadinchura, Ori Varadha”.

If your mind also is like my mind, My vow would no doubt bear fruit, Besides

Like sugar cane bearing fruit again and again.

doubled would become my joy.

"Naamanasu vantidhe nee manasaithe" sounds so simple. But simple it is not. It means, "If you long for me, as I long for you, my dream would come true". "Sugar-cane itself is sweet. If it also bears fruit, how sweet that fruit would be! Similarly, the happiness of my life also would be doubled, if you love me as I love you."

"Adhigaaka" and "Ori Varadha" are interjections. 'Adhigaaka' creates a pause, a dramatic pause. We are kindled and we are craving to hear what follows. "Ori Varadha" reveals the close intimacy between the nayika and nayaka. The nayika addresses the nayaka in the second person singular, just as intimate playmates address each other. I do not know the English equivalent of "Ori" and without that, how can I explain the beauty of this Padham? There is so much of beauty in 'Ori Varadha.' When man and woman are intoxicated with love they discard all decorum and resort to all sorts of liberties. "Ori Varadha" means all these things.

The Mukhari of this Padham churns our heart. When I heard this Padham for the first time, one phrase in it stunned me and flung me back to my boyhood, nearly six decades across the vault of time. As a boy I used to attend the street dramas in my village, "Therukoothu", enacted by actors, whom the sophisticated votaries of today would treat as low class illiterates. In fact the chief actors in one of the famous troupes of those days, called "Velam Jadhai", named after the village Velam in North Arcot district, were dhobis. But how can I forget their "Dhroupadhi Thuyil"? When Dhussasana dragged Dhroupadhi by her sari, Dhroupadhi wailed and cried for Krishna in Mukhari, made more poignant by the shrill tone of

Mukhaveena, in the *thaarasthaayi* Precious memories which we cannot get even for gold! I have strayed away from Kshethrayya, but not without purpose. That Mukhari of Dhroupadhi has been haunting me all my life. When I heard this Nayika's Mukhari, it came to my mind like a flash. There was something elemental in it. What more can I say! Such deep feelings are beyond words. It is foolish to attempt to communicate them with mediocre means. Truly.

Sri ragam.

"Manasu ninnedabaayadhu pranesa! naa
Manasu ninnedabaasi kshanamaina norvadhu
Manavaalakinchu Sri Muvva
Gopala! Saami!

My mind can never part from you,
My Lord!

My mind can't stand even a
moment's separation from you,

I beseech you to listen to my prayer,
Sri Muvva Gopala! My Lord!

I am completely at a loss to describe the mood of Sri ragam in this Padham. It is totally different from the Sri ragam of *Endharo Mahaanubhaavulu*, which has some stateliness in it. Here, the nayika implores the Lord in soft words and in a soft voice, just to listen to her prayer "Edabaaya", "manavi" and "aalakinchu" are not uncommon words. But in this setting they have acquired an uncommon power of appeal. In response to the tender mood of the nayika and the tender spirit of her words, Sri ragam has assumed an even more tender tone! The soul of Sri ragam is there, everywhere, as ever. But

the form has changed, unbelievably. Is this the same Sri ragam which we have known so long so well, we ask ourselves! What genius Kshethrayya should have had to discover that Sri ragam can take this shape also! The way the ragam fades away at "Sami" at the end of the anupallavi, has a terrific effect. Utter despair. One may ask how can a thing that is fading away, have any effect at all! That is the mystery of music. Still I am not able to decide whether it is pity or distress or despair that this Padham has roused in me. Whatever it is and whatever it is not, it is a wondrous Sri Ragam!

Bouli.

"Kodikoose nayyayyo naagunde
jallu jallu mane namma

Chedero naasaamivadhacheri maatalaadenanthalo "Kodi"

The cock crowed, Oh God, my
heart quaked and quailed,
my dear!

O dear, even before I could talk to
my beloved, the cock crowed, and
my heart quaked.

Repetition of words is one kind of alankara. But certain words only can be repeated, as for example "he talked and talked and I laughed and laughed". "Jallu jallu" in Telugu is alluring, particularly in this context. In English, shudder, twitter, tingle etc. are its equivalents. None of these equivalents can be repeated. Nor do they reveal the depth of the nayika's misery. So I have chosen "quake and quail" as they seem to be nearer to "jallu

jallu". They also have some symphony in them, though not the same. Kshethrayya has many charming names for the maiden friends of the nayika "Chedoro" is one of them. They sound a little odd, but that is their beauty.

The cock crowing has some place in our life. It is the harbinger of dawn. Therefore, before darkness disappears, the nayaka quits the nayiki, sadly and reluctantly. This is a familiar theme in our love poetry. But, more than the sensual side of it, the cock-crow has a much wider and deeper spiritual side. It is the hour when the devotees wake up and start their ablutions. We have a glorious picture of this in the first *paasuram* of Thiruppavai. In the sixth *paasuram*, Andal wakes her friend like this: "The birds are singing, the devotees are praying, in Lord Vishnu's temple. Wake up darling, don't you hear their noise?". One should be fortunate atleast to read and enjoy the literary beauty of these *paasurams*, leave alone their inner meaning.

Bouli seems to be the very voice of the dawn. The Bouli that I heard one day bowled me out completely. It was piercing, agonising, ravishing and maddening. It was mystical and transcendental. I wondered wherefrom did it come and whereto did it go.

Thodi.

"Sudhina maayane eeprodhu sudhina maayane eeprodhu

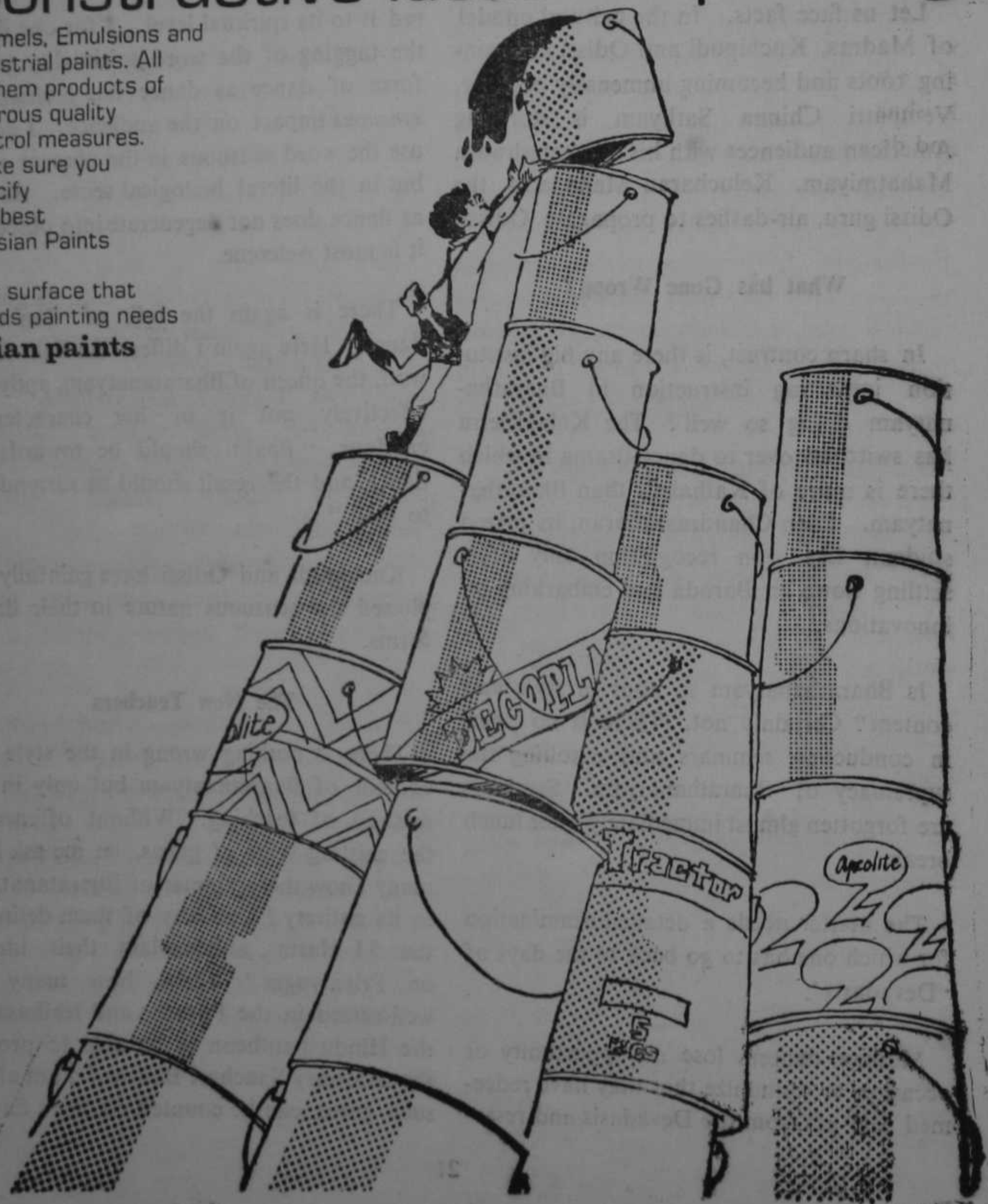
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A Package Deal

What's being done today is to have a package-deal with the aspirants that a course consisting of 8 or 9 items from the gamut of Alarippu to the Thillana shall be taught in 18 months for a five-figure consideration, plus an Arangetram costing an equal amount. No wonder dancers dance like robots without knowing the meaning or grammar. Have we not seen dancers mistaking Gopalakrishna Bharati for Lord Krishna himself and depicting him with a flute?

I shall quote only one instance to describe the supremacy of Balasaraswati's abhinaya. She was interpreting the *Swarajati* "Ma Moha Lahiri Meerudhe" in 'Khamas'. Shiva returns home and beckons endearingly to his son Muruga, coyly seated on Parvati's lap, to come. The boy refuses. Shiva tries again but with no avail. Then he wonders what's wrong with himself and discovers to his dismay that there is a cobra on his head, a skull in his hand and a tiger's skin to match—which child will dare to come near him? He changes his dress and the magic works.

Pray, tell me, is there any Abhinaya today, even approximating to this?

Soul-less Music

The Bharatanatyam orchestra, pardon me, is the worst in the world. Totally devoid of 'Bhava', with lyrics mangled and mutilated, they sing, spoiling the entire mood. Just the opposite of Kuchipudi and Odissi, where they sing soulfully. Music makes all the difference. Bhava, Raga, Thala—that is Bharatanatyam.

We pride ourselves on rhythmic intricacies. Granted. But of late, our Jatis have assumed monstrous proportions, with no relation to footwork or Adavu. Speed? Yes, again granted. But where is the clarity of execution? Adavus become distorted, sloppy and jerky. No wonder Bharatanatyam attracts few rasikas. It has become stale and repetitive. There must be an organic growth in the evolution and de-nouement of Jatis. I leave it to the pundits to confirm or deny this statement (or allegation).

Kshetragnya

I now come to Padams, the kingpin of this style. How many present-day dancers know that there was a person called Kshetragnya? I am only giving a translation of two of his master-pieces where Sringara is suggestive, subdued and scintillating.

1. "EtvantiVaadey"—Kshetragnya Padam (Telugu)—Raga Kalyani, Tala Misra chapu.

The heroine is young, innocent and new to love (Aagnaatha, Yauvana, Mugdha).

"Dear girl, with the beautiful hair, tell me, what kind of a man is he?"

I believe, he is called Muvva Gopala but he has never come to this street. I believe he is dark-bodied, Oh friend and that he knows fine ways of pleasing women.

I hear that he talks sweetly and indeed has mastered all ways of appealing to women.

They say this is the absolute truth and that he has actually studied the art of loving.

What kind of a man is he? He wears a fine gold-edged dhoti it seems, and he has made all kinds of bets (about his prowess). I am told that he has tirelessly enjoyed countless women, that he is a great musician and loves the fine things of life . . . what kind of a man is he?

I believe he claims he would have me too and before we have even met, he has found out every single thing about me! It's a pity that I missed him when he came to this street the other day.

Muvva Gopala is young and handsome, I hear! What kind of a man is he?"

* * *
"Baalaro": Kshetrappa Padam. (Telugu). Raga—Navarose. Tala Misra chapu.

The companion describes the hero's suffering:

"Young maiden! That Muvva Gopala always thinks of you and utters your name repeatedly. . . .

Why in the world did you forsake him and come away?

How did your feet let you move from there?

Sighing wearily, he shakes his head in sorrow. He suddenly rises from the bed, in passion.

He searches wildly for you . . . and slowly his red-rimmed eyes fill with tears. . . .

O young one, have you no pity? How could your feet move away from there. . . .?

This feature has perforce become provocative and aggressive but I can assure my readers that it is born more out of anguish than anger.

TWO MUSIC CRITICS

Earnest Newman: (Former music critic of *Manchester Guardian*).

"You know, as a Music Critic, you labour under a serious disadvantage?"

Neville Cardus: "What is it?"

Newman: "You like music, my dear man, actually like it. It will be the ruin of you!"

* * *
Music must weave its golden ladder strand by strand; the Composer is the rope-climber of the arts—*Neville Cardus*.

The Art of Listening to Carnatic Music

There seems to be a general apprehension that Carnatic music is losing its former votaries—this concern is most felt by many of the Sabhas where attendances, except perhaps for the top rank artists, are getting thinner. The change is attributed to the inroads made by the radio and television into the tastes of viewers and listeners and the pressures of living in urban areas. To my mind, this is a superficial view of the cultural world, as it does not take into account some basic developments in the art world.

A Collaboration

All art is a collaboration between the artist and the listener/viewer. It is especially so in the case of Carnatic classical music as musicians are constantly rejuvenated by the sensibility and comprehensions of the listeners. Of course, popular acclaims are rarely based on comparative merit but often on personality considerations. And yet, the general public is not so dead to the captivating attributes of a really good musician—his voice, his technique, his aesthetic sense—as to welcome the shoddy, irresponsible musician. In a very fundamental sense, the really talented or great musician—vocalist or instrumentalist—is still accorded instant recognition. Flute Mali, Gottuvadyam performer Ravi Kiran, Mandolin Srinivas have been greeted with instant recognition and appreciation. It is only those artists, whose merit is a few rungs lower on the appreciation ladder, who may

be seeing their coinage depreciated; and as these form the bulk of artists in the musical arena, the cry of classical music on the decline has been raised.

The Sound Syndrome

Classical Carnatic music of vintage quality is a delicate nymph whose gentle nature has been ravaged by the modern penchant for huge volumes of sound through the public address system and by the increasing ebb of refinement among the listening public. Mr. Yehudi Menuhin has said "The cinema has done great harm to concert halls . . . amplifying the sound to a deafening level of decibels." The acoustics of modern concert halls are horrible, not to speak of the atrocious acoustic properties of the make-shift halls arranged for Carnatic music. The combination of bad acoustics, excessive amplification and average performing ability is wreaking havoc on our musical culture. By a curious atavistic reversion, a certain entertainment value is ascribed to phoney, loud music.

In the West Too

Even in the West, there seems to be a similar situation prevailing. While Mr. Yehudi Menuhin bemoans the acoustics of modern concert halls including the recently constructed Royal Festival Hall in London, Sir Donald Tovey has observed that many beautiful early 18th century instruments like the clavichord became obsolete because "they had not enough tone to be displayed

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in large rooms and the clavichord was too delicate to be used in combination with other instruments" Actually, the clavichord, most sensitive of the keyed instruments of that genius J. S. Bach, left volume "to the imagination and presented delicate shades of tone in reality". The case of our Veena, a great classical instrument capable of rendering 22 sruthis is on an exact footing. It has been held to have no value as an accompaniment—a role which it had a century ago—condemned without proper trial!

Craze for New

Most modern listeners are convinced that music is grander in proportion to the number of deviations from traditional songs and their 'padantharas' and to the number of new songs turned out by all and sundry "composers" masquerading as innovators. Any music cast in traditional forms or idioms is becoming more and more suspect in their eyes, however first-rate the craftsmanship. In short, there is a craze for novelty, however poor the texture of the music. Listening to electronic music in the Western world makes one wonder whether the atom has been split. Almost similar is the penchant in our country for loudly rendered syncopated music which suggests the existence of a perverted mind delving into decadence and revelling in the macabre.

Role of New Devices

With the advancement of technology and science, musical devices may go on being improved in many ways. Yet the greatness of the music will not depend upon them, but on whether great men are born to produce it - and that is a matter

that obeys no laws which historians or biologists have discovered. So, however much they may try to introduce novelty at the cost of tested traditional values and take advantage of electronics to magnify the sound to reach huge audiences of five figures, the fundamental beauty and appeal of our music will be seriously compromised.

Seek Not Beauty Alone

What the modern listener overlooks is that in classical music, "it is not necessary for the music to be consistently beautiful in order to possess merit or be great. Familiarity has a great deal to do with recognition of melodic beauty." (Suzanne K. Langer in "Feeling and Form"). A trained ear which should include the inner ear of the mind, is very essential to discern and enjoy the aesthetic beauties of our ragas, the tingling rhythmic dynamics of kritis (as in Tyagaraja's Pancharatna kritis) and their pervasive "ragabhava" as with Muthuswamy Dikshitar's compositions. Adequate training of the ear and the mind can be got only by devoting patient, respectful and studious attention to serious classical music, purveyed by elder masters and steeped in time-tested tradition. Every kriti of the Trinity, for example, may well be described as the precious life blood of a master spirit, treasured and encapsuled on purpose for a life beyond life.

Need For A Code

The revival of interest in true Carnatic music thus hinges on a new code of conduct for the musician and his patrons. The musician has to forsake resort to cheap gimmicks, second rate songs by third rate

composers and the preference for mechanical rather than melodic, soulful music. He must develop an enduring faith that even large audiences will appreciate the fine nuances, the great emotional appeal and the basically enthralling songs of the classical tradition if sung correctly. The increasing crowds recently witnessed at the music demonstration and appreciation lectures given by competent artists like Dr. S. Ramanathan, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Sandyavandanam Srinivasa Rao, D.K. Jayaraman, etc. suggest that the public are quite keen to improve their knowledge, broaden their horizons and deepen their insights. The rapport between the musician and his audience may thus increase substantially and the alarming gap between the two can be considerably narrowed.

Roles of Virtuosity and Tradition

Let me conclude by a quote from a famous Western writer on music:

"Familiarity and habituation are important factors in determining attitude and taste. Familiarity begets affection:

liking depends on familiarity. Dislike has its roots in the fear of the unknown. As far as music is concerned, people do not appear to be curious about and interested in, the unknown. *They like what they know, although they insist that they know what they like.* The range of interests of regular concert-goers is restricted to the type of music of which they have had experience. The importance of familiarity and habituation also points to the need for controlled and systematic repetition."

The significance of the above excerpt is surely that, if a musician merrily goes on rendering all kinds of music irrespective of its intrinsic quality, his audiences will be bewildered and sooner or later, will file out of the auditorium in disgust and desperation. The musician should, all the while, keep forging bridges of understanding with his listeners and that will be possible only if virtuosity, tradition and talent are deeply imprinted in his music.

KSM.



The Evolution of Padam and Sri Annamacharya's Contribution to Padakavita

By

Smt. S. K. RAJAMANICHARI

In the evolution of linguistic and literary forms Pada Kavita will be earlier to Padya (Poem) Kavita. A Pada Kavita is a musical composition. In the mouth of a caressing mother and in the cries and woes of people, Padam is born. From the time of Nannayya and Palkuriki Somanatha, all the Telugu Desi 'Chandas' (Metres) were sung as Geyas. Geyam is another word for song. Composition of words is called 'Vakku'. Composition of song is called "Geyam". "Vakku" goes by another name "Matuvu" and "Geyam" is known as 'Dhatuvu'. A Vaggeyakara should possess high ability in both Sahityam (Matuvu) and Samgeetham (Dhatuvu).

What is a Prabandham? In the science of music, it is a scientific musical composition, as dictated by lakshana kartas like Bharata and spread in all local languages Vaggeyakara should have "Prabandeshu Pragalbhata".

Prabandhas

Suda Prabandham, Ela, (Ganaila Matrila, Vikritaila, Varnaila, Desadaila, Karnataila, Dravidaila, Andhraila, Karana, Vartana, Denki, Jhombhata, Lambhaka, Rasaka, Ekatali, Varna, Varnaswara, Gadya, Kaivada, Amkacharini, Kanda, Hayaleela, Gajaleela, Dwipadi, Chakravaka, Krauncha Pada, Swarartha, Dwani Kuttani, Arya Gatha, Kalahamsa, Totaka,

Raga Kadamba, Panchataleswara, Talar-nava, Chatushpadi, Shatpadi, Dandaka, Kanduka, Dhavala, Mangalacharanam..... all these come under Prabandhas.

Padams

Since the word 'Padabandham' is being used for 'Prabandham', the word 'Padam' seems to be another word for Prabandham. In Bharata's Lakshana grandha, Padam is the root of all the "Geya Rachanas". Padams are of two kinds, (1) Nibaddha and (2) Anibaddha. Choornikas come under Anibaddha Rachanas. In Nibaddha Rachanas, there are three Vritta Padas. 1. Sama Vrittis. 2. Artha Sama Vrittis. 3. Vishama Vrittis. In "Dhruva Pada Chapter", Bharata took the Vrittapadas from the 26 (twenty six) 'Chandas' (Metres) of Ukta, Madhya, Pratishta, Supratishtha, Gayatri, Ushnik, Anushtup, Brihati, Pamkti, Trishtup, Jagati, Ati Jagati, etc.,. Sri, Pratishta, Vidyut Branta, Bhootala Manya, Kamalamuki—all these 200 Padas come under Dhruva Padas.

Types of Prabandha

From the word "Dhruva Padas", "Daruvu" seems to have been derived. Prabandhas are mainly of 3 types. (1) Kevala Matu (2) Sahayyaka Samgeetha Prabandham. (2) Datuvu and Matuvu will

be given equal importance. (Their style of writing will be in local language.) 3. Mixture of the above two kinds.

Prabandham has 4 Dhatuvus as parts of its body. 1. Udgraham. 2. Melapakam. 3. Dhruvam. 4. Abhogam. Udgraham is the beginning. Dhruvam is the ending. Melapakam joins the above two. Abhogam expresses writer's name or the deity's name. It is sung in high pitch. There is 'Antaree' also in some Prabandhas.

Prabandhas are Dwidhatukas, (has udgraha & Dhruva) Tridhatukas (has udgraha, Dhruva and Abhoga) and Chaturdhatukas (has udgraha, Dhruva, Melapaka and Abhoga) and also Panchadhatukas (Antaree is added). At present, udgraham is called 'Anupallavi' and Dhruvam is called 'Pallavi'.

The Angas of Prabandhas

Swaram, Birudam, Padam, Tinakam, Patam, and Talam are the six organs (Angas) of Prabandhas which are Dhatu Rachana Pradhanas.

1. Swaram, means "Sa ri ga ma da" swaras. 2. Birudam describes the qualities of Nayaka. 3. Tenakam comes from the word 'tena'—a word frequently and relatively used for Parameswara, God. 4. Patam is a combination of words like Taka taka, Tuku tuku, and Dimta, dimta. 5. Padam means words. 6. Talam means sound.

Medini Jati Prabandhas have six Angas. Anandini Jati Prabandhas have six Angas. 'Deevani' has 4 Angas. Bhavani has 3 Angas and Taravali Jati has 2 Angas. There are Sruti Prabandhas (has

six Angas) Neeti Prabandhas (has five Angas), Sena Prabandhas (has four Angas) Kavita Prabandhas (has three Angas) and Champu Prabandhas (has 2 Angas).

The Padam became Samkirtana which is a devotional Kirtana from Sri Tyagaraja's times. Dhruva Padam is called Daruvu.

Annamacharya's Sankirtanas

Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya's Pada or Samkirtanas were written in Desiya Telugu. But they have become a 'treasure' to Pundits as well. As a child, Annamaya was inspired by the folk songs of the villagers of Tallapaka, Ungutur and Mandemu Palli and he decided to make it literary. He wrote a Samkirtana Lakshana Grandha in Sanskrit to make his compositions acceptable to both pundits and pamaras (laymen). It was translated into Telugu by Chinna Tirmalayya, his family member. "Utsaha, Sugandhi, Mattakokila, Panchachamaram, Kavi Raja Virajitam. Krauncha Padam, which are Sanskrit Vrittis with "layatmaka Geya Shuddhi" and Jati Chandas like 'Kandas' could be used in 'Samkirtanas' he said. "In local Telugu language, Daruvus, Jakkala Rekulu, Elas, Gobbillu, Chandamama Padas, could be used for Yaksha Ganas." Textual language for males, delicate Gramya Bhasha for females, a mixture of accent language for Chenchulu, and Erukalu (Mountain Jati People) were also prescribed by Sri Annamaya.

Sri Annamaya's Samkirtanas paved the way for the Sringara Padas of Sri Kshetraya, Adhyatma Ramayana Kirtanas

of Sri Subrahmanya Kavi. and for Sri Ramadas's Kirtanas. These are used for daily services to God His Rachanas are manifold :

1. Stree Purusha Samvada Geetas,
2. Sishuleela Padas,
3. Utsava Sampradaya Bhajans,
4. Tatvika, Laukika, Rajakeeya, Samghika,
5. Criticals, Morals, Philosophy,
6. Elas, Jajaras, Vennalla Padas,
7. Lali, Shobhanam, Melukolupu, Dampullu, Nalugu, Changu Bhalas, Tandanas, and Allone-rallas.
8. On Music and specially on Vaishnavism and Sri Venkatachalapati's Prasastyam (Greatness).

Ragas extinct

He used 100 to 150 Ragas in his Padas. Ragas like Telugu Kambhoji, Konda Malahari, Dravida Bhairavi, Desalam, Abali, Amara Sindhu, Mukhari Pantu, Suddha Ramakriya, Saurashtra Gujjari, were used by him. but these Ragas are not heard now a days. Mohana, Ananda Bhairavi, Hari Kambhoji, Kharaharapriya etc. were not in vogue in Sri Annamaya's time. All his 32,000 Kirtanas were imprinted in Copper Plates and preserved in Sri Bhandaram of Tirupati. They are mostly Sringara, and in Eka, Dwi, Tri, Chaturdha and Pancha Dhatukas. His Rachanas were of great influence over Sri Purandara Dasa his contemporary, whose meeting with Sri Annamaya has ultimately led to the evolution of Carnatic classical music. Sri Annamaya's Rachanas have pallavi and charanams. Talas were not indicated.

Karnatic and Hindustani systems of music were not divided then.

A Source of Inspiration

He is Pada Kavita Margadarsi, and Pada Kavita Pitamaha. He has sown the seeds for Kshetraya's Padodyanam (Garden of Padas) and Sri Tyagaraja's Kirtana Brindavanam. He was an undaunted devotee of God and Narastuti Paramukha. He is a Mahakavi and Maha Geyakavi who reflected the image of dreams in Telugu life, specially the Sringara Veeratva of Telugu lovers.

The historical Background

There are historical reasons also for Sri Annamaya's birth. The country was being ruled by Muslims. While the Muslim culture was spreading among people, the Hindu culture was losing its vitality. There was no 'chitta shuddhi' among devotees. Differences became wider between religions and castes. Yagnas and Yagas lost purity of purpose. People believed that whatever sins they committed can be washed off by building temples and performing 'dhanas'.

At this time, Potuluri Veera Brahendra Swami and Sri Annamaya were born to rescue the world from its drift into darkness and revive it to a new chaitanyam (Life). While Sri Potuluri propagated in his Kala Jnana Tatwa Kirtanas about Sarva Samata Vadam, Sri Annamaya propagated Bhaktimarga and said "God abides in everybody" and "Charachara Jagat is Bhagavanmayam".

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Harikatha—A Tool for Social Change

Katha is a general but well known word for a kind of discourse called variously as Hari Katha, Keerthan, Kathakata, Keertan, Karhakalakshepam and so on. These are regional differences and exhibit variations in form and content. But Katha Kalakshepam or just katha is a one man show: a discourse with story and song with a certain extent of group participation and has been a very effective tool of entertainment and communication for centuries.

The katha (or its variant) is then a purposive form of communication. It was an art primarily and originally directed by and towards bhakti experience. But since it draws to itself commentaries on ways of living and correctives therefor it naturally became contemporaneous to different degrees in different contexts.

The katha or keertan to be described here is mainly found in the southern peninsula. It is quite possible that the present style began in Maharashtra wherein it seems to have been given a strong and definite orientation by the saint Namdev (10th century). He is supposed to have spread it even to the Punjab. It also travelled far south and took root in Tamil Nadu, in its present form, most likely 150 years ago, during the Maratha rule. And the traditional mode of rendition goes by the name of Naradi paddhati, after Narada, the patron saint of all musicians in India.

The performance has two sections :

(i) *The poorva ranga* or the first 'act' will necessarily start with a song in obeisance to Lord Ganesha, he who clears all obstacles and to the Guru. Then may follow devotional songs (bhajan, namavali, abhang and such other types) in praise of one or more deities. The poorva ranga has a number of niroopanas—that is, songs containing the theme of the discourse. Again and again, the performers will interrupt their singing to utter the Name of the Lord (nama ghosha) when the audience join in chorus. The bhagavatar may explain the significance of the topic through quotations from Veda, other religious texts, writings of great men and so on. In essence, the poorva ranga is the statement and adumbration of the subject of the evening. The necessary foundations are laid.

(ii) *The uttara ranga* or the second 'act', is devoted to the parable. With prose, poetic recitation, song and jig, the musician and his companions narrate at length a story to illustrate the point made in the poorva ranga. It is generally from Hindu mythology and leads gradually to a climax, carrying the listeners to a pitch of religious fervour. But, as was said earlier, one of the objects of the keertan is to educate men and women to a clean and sane life.

It is evident that the keertankar has to be a versatile artiste. If he has a philosophical bent of mind, his performance will

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The Greatness of Carnatic Music

By

V. SWAMINATHAN

Music *sans* divinity is just noise, perhaps a measured noise. Music, particularly Carnatic music, combined with the love of God is a sure means of attaining salvation. It would be sacrilegious to look at music from any other angle. This has been amply illustrated by Saint Thyagaraja in his famous kriti in Sankarabaranam "swara-raga sudharasa yuta bhakti swarga apava-ragamura" meaning "devotion backed up by the nectar of swara & raga is verily paradise & salvation". It is not mere entertainment, as some are prone to think. Mere knowledge of music without bhakti does not lead one to the right path.

1) Thyagaraja likened ragas to priceless gems in his Ritigowla kriti "Ragaratna Malikache" and the saint even goes to the extent of asserting that Lord Sankara himself is the very embodiment of music "Naa da Tanumanisam Sankaram".

3) Adi Sankara, in his benign teachings, has prescribed three cardinal norms for mankind to observe, in order to attain the superman stage - ethical living, service to humanity, & meditation. The last one meditation, is the most efficacious means of attaining godhood & music is the best accessory to real meditation. Out of the eleven forms of bhaktia numbrated in Narada Bhakti Sutras, such as sravanam, kirtanam, smaranam etc, the easiest forms i.e. kirtanam & atma nivedanam, were chosen by Sri Thyagaraja as they could be conveniently practised at any time

& at any place, without the need for elaborate paraphernalia. Normally, it is very difficult to contain the vagrant mind engaged in meditation but while practising music, where the concentration is on the purity of sruthi, layam, swaram & sahityam the mind stands still automatically, at least until the completion of the rendering of the kriti.

3) Thyagaraja in his munificent bounty, has laid "The Raja Margam" for practising music, *vide* his kriti in Thodi "Kaddanu Varighi". One school of thought insists that Carnatic music stands out among other systems of music as the most scientifically perfected system, and not without justification.

4) Carnatic music, if & when rendered strictly in accordance with established tradition, is capable of being a perfect vehicle for depicting the various emotional states such as love, fatigue, despondency, jealousy, dejection, ecstasy, anger, frustration & so on. Both the singer & the knowledgeable listener are raised to ethereal heights of exaltation, resulting in soul-satisfying horripilation, provided the singer sings a piece in the proper bhava.

5) Because of these divine attributes, musicians of the by-gone era with spotless character were held in utmost reverence by the listeners. Carnatic music is the noblest spiritual heritage handed to us from generation to generation & greatly embellished

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The G.N.B. Trust - An Appeal

It is common knowledge that the late G. N. Balasubramaniam, B.A. (Hons) made a substantial and inimitable contribution to the study, propagation and brilliant rendering of Carnatic music during his short life—a legacy that still glows!

His great work has to be carried on and the flaming torch he lit has to be kept aloft.

Music Lovers will be glad to know that the 75th Birth Anniversary of the late Sangita Kalanidhi Sri G. N. B. is proposed to be celebrated at Madras on 6th January, 1985. It is also proposed to release his Biography on that date and celebrate "GNB Day" during 1985, in all parts of India and abroad.

A trust called 'GNB Trust' has been formed, headed by his son Sri G. B. Duraiswamy, for the sole purpose of widely circulating the achievements and the music of Sri GNB and publicising his compositions and writings all over the world.

An elaborate and extensive archives of his music, writings etc. has already been instituted. The organisers wish to appeal to all genuine music lovers and personal collectors of music tapes to kindly come forward and offer any rare/old recordings, writings, photographs of Sri GNB or send details of these to the following address :



Sri G.N.B.

Sri G. B. Duraiswamy
Coordinator
GNB 75th Birth Anniversary
Celebrations
158, Santhome High Road
Madras-600 004
Telephone : 77376

Last but not the least, it is also proposed to release a few cassettes of this compositions as sung by his distinguished disciples. A GNB School of Music will also be started where genuine students will be taught free his compositions wherever possible by his disciples and also where necessary, by supply cassettes and lessons containing renderings of his compositions by his sishyas.

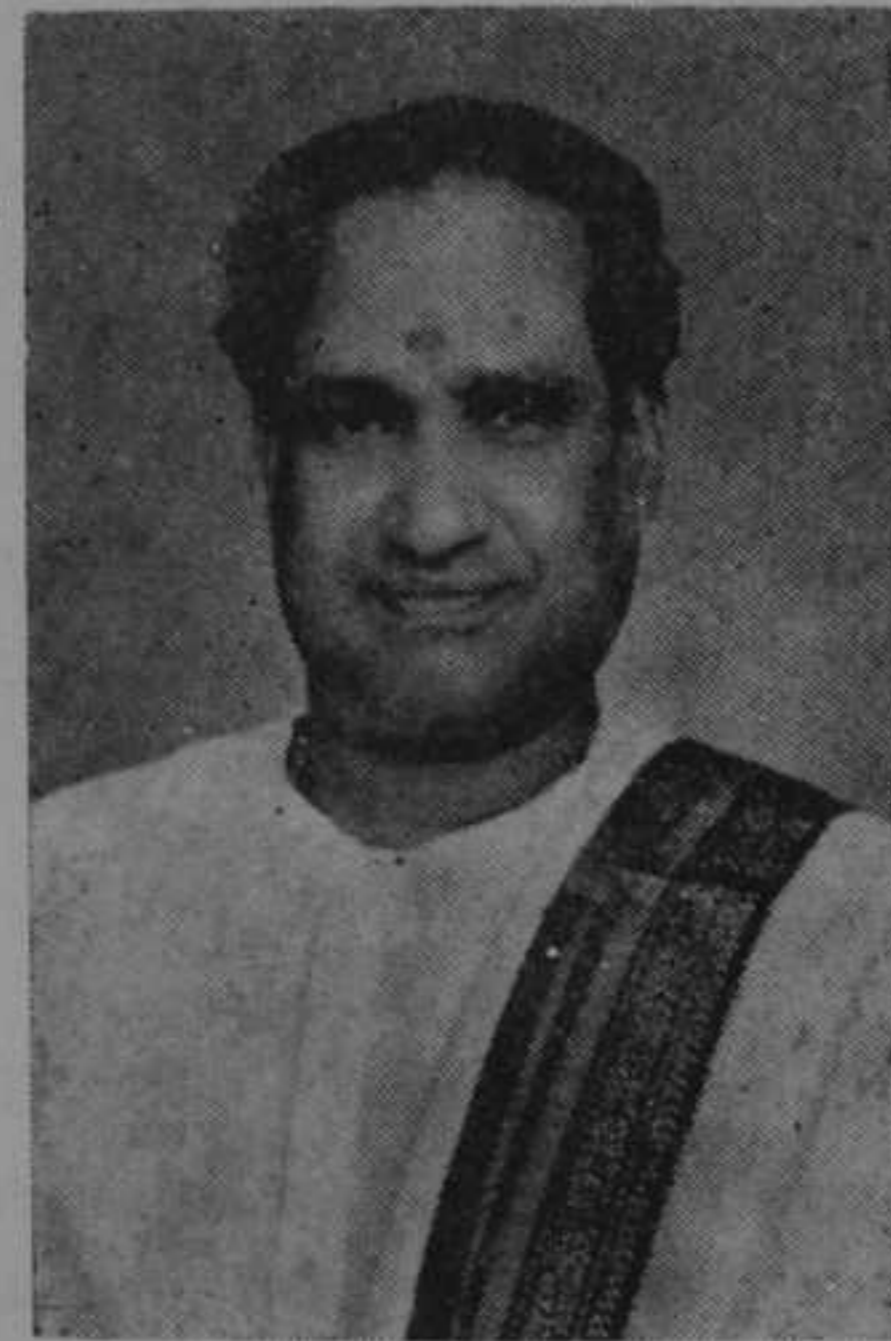
The Towering Guru of Rajarajeswari

By
KINNARI

It was June 29 this year, Melodious Mandolin music was wafting through Kalaimamani Guru Govindraj Pillai's room. Tears were trickling down the Guru's eyes. Even as he was moved by the child prodigy Srinivas' music played from the cassette, he was worried about his own physical weakness that kept him unable to sing. Yes, music was his life breath though he extended his interests and mastered the art of Bharata Natyam.

Born amidst the luscious greens of Tanjavur district at Ayyampettai on June 22, 1914 this only son of the well known Thavil Vidwan Tyagarajan and wife Iswari Ammal had intensive training in music under Nagaswara stalwarts like Vidwan Venugopala Pillai, Tiruvavaduturai Markanda Pillai (Guru of the peerless T. N. Rajarathnam). On marrying Karunambal, the daughter of Natyacharya Sri T. P. Kuppiyah Pillai, Govindaraja Pillai switched on to the practice and teaching of the art of Bharata Natyam. And then on it was a life of music and dance he dedicated himself to.

Govindaraja Pillai's arrival in the Bombay cultural scene was significant. It was 1945, a period of nationalistic sentiments against the dying alien rule and Bombay, the nerve centre of Indian resurgence, was pulsating with pride over every thing that was national.



GURU GOVINDRAJA PILLAI

The master's arrival to assist an artiste-enthusiast proved more than a mere visit. He remained to 'conquer' and establish that premier institution, the Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir, Bombay that had known till then only Kathak and had perhaps its tryst with Bharata Natyam! More. He planted the Tanjavur style in Maharashtra soil and helped it spread overseas.

Among his early disciples, veterans like Kathak doyens Damayanti Joshi, Roshan Kumari, Gopi Krishna and cine actresses Kamini Kaushal and Nalini Jayawant are noteworthy. No exaggeration it is that under the able guidance of the Rajarajeswari gurus the institution is the best example of national integration with students from all regions and climes.

And students of the Mandir have travelled far and wide establishing schools in places like the U.S.A., Canada, Malaysia, Singapore etc.

Majestic in appearance, humble in deportment, minute to the details, punctilious to the core, the stately stalwart was a pleasing and engaging conversationalist, reflecting his rich cultural background and knowledge. He would not easily exhaust talking on raga vinyasa or tala variation. Gentle were his ways of tackling the students who have difficulty in understanding. Yet a strict disciplinarian was he. No slackening of pace nor lackadaisical move,

even in a huge class, would escape his hawk eye. A habitual wearer of khadi, he had quite often been in the forefront for supporting many worthy, social, cultural and educational causes.

The voice that towered at every recital of the Mandir, the voice that affectionately guided and conducted every programme was silenced on Ashada Ekadesi day (9th July). Though that voice will be heard no more, the spirit of his singing would surely guide the host of students that he has left behind.

(Continued from Page 33)

tend to be of a type usually called the pravachana; but if his taste leans towards entertainment, it is more popular with the lay. It is only with such a background he can be a good raconteur. But, added to all these, he has to be a good musician: with training in classical, light and folk music of various styles and regions. Command of various languages and songs in

them and good voice are naturally of great advantage. Finally, he has to be a keertankar in the real sense, his personal life must be above reproach.

All art does get modified in content and/or form by the dynamics of social change; and the katha keertan is no exception.

Dr. B. C. Deva

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by the great Trinity of Music, Thyagaraja, Dikshitar & Shyama Sastri. It is therefore incumbent upon both the exponents & connoisseurs alike to see that the pristine purity of the music is maintained with utmost sanctity and not allowed to degenerate into vulgar gimmickry.

6) It will not be out of place to mention here that it is also imperative that parents should inculcate some knowledge

of music in their children (just as the older generation was doing), if Carnatic music were not to slide into oblivion.

7) Finally, a word to the teachers of Carnatic music. It is advisable that they should themselves know the meaning of each kriti, before teaching their words so that they can also teach the correct bhavas contemplated in the kritis.

Long Live Carnatic Music !

Cultural Scene in Bombay

By

DR. SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

A scion of the purist-melodist Madurai Mani Iyer, whose tradition is steeped in 'sruthileeyam' and affording at the same time full scope to his imagination, Tiruvenkadu Jayaraman has been scoring high in the musical scene. To the style which he treads with reverence and high fidelity, he has added a new dimension with his stentorian volume that lends a classical weight all its own.

Tiruvenkadu Jayaraman splendid

Jayaraman's (Aug. '84) at the Sabha could easily be the best among the cutcheris Shanmukhananda Sabha programmed during the quarter. Apparently an 'anjali' to Muthuswamy Dikshitar, as his repertoire mostly comprised the vageyakara's gems like "Mathangi", (Ramamanohari), "Sri Matha" (Begada), "Bhajarere chitta" (Kalyani) and "Sri Vaidyanatham" (Atana). Jayaraman did not impair the concert balance otherwise. There were substantive niraval improvisations and saravalaghu swaraprastharas besides elaborate alapanas.

After a spirited swara-studded "Nijamarmamulanu" (Umabharanam), Jayaraman's Ramamanohari alapana raised the standard and texture of the cutcheri. Begada was another breezy essay with many cascades of aesthetic designs. The madhyamakala gearing of "Sri Matha"

was, however compensated by solid swara prastharas. A touch of class was brought on to Kalyani with a rare majestic aura. The towering niraval only reiterated the essence of gurukula, a thing of the past during present times.

Nattakuranji Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi in Tripu-al misra nadai, followed by a moving Virutham left a lasting impress. The young violinist, Nagai Muralidaran, endeared himself by coaxing the violin to sing the song, evoke raga bhava and fondle it with swara stances. Sure to join the array of sweet-toned violinists who are the pride of Karnatak music today. Amiable Mannargudi Easwaran anticipated every musical move and added his own rhythmic facade through his Thani.

Husband - Wife Nagaswaram recital

More than the quality of music, it was the bold venture into an exacting instrument of the Nagaswaram couple, Shaikh Mabhoob Subhani and Kaleeshabi, and their dedication and perseverance that attracted listeners during their August month performance of the Sabha. Perhaps for the first time such a dueting has been taken up by a husband-wife team.

Though they played with confidence and mutual accommodation, the husband

sounded more mature with depth and polish and the wife still bubbling with enthusiasm and treating alapanas as one stretch of melody stream without any of the life-giving, mood-evoking pauses. These chelas of Shaikh Chinna Moulana have to attune their musical senses to the microtonal nuance and their infinite plausibilities so prerequisite for launching on highly sensitive ragas such as Nilambari, and playing kritis like "Amba Nilambari".

Their Arabhi kriti registered a well-rehearsed synchrony and one wished they took the same effort in every kriti. Kaleeshabi's Todi was good enough. Their Pallavi needed polish. The twin thavil by Swaminathan and Muthukumar was quite a boost though they could have avoided the folk-slant in the midst of serious classical rhythmic dialogue.

Raghavendraswami's Charithram

August had a 'bonus' programme of a Harikatha on a Saint whose life story has not been as popularised as his songs, Raghavendra Swamy of Mantralayam. "Sadaa Sravana Maado..." the essence of Sravana cascading through various illustrations before focussing on the 'Mantralaya Mahatmiyam' in the sonorous voice of Sri Venkataramana Rao was an experience that was at once educative and elevating. It was an 'emotional' journey for full four hours through the 'mahatmiyam', delving into the labrynth of Raghavendra Swamy's avatara and bhakti who, he revealed, was Prahlada reborn. In the true tradition of a Harikatha of keeping rhythm with ankle bells tied to the feet, Rao expounded with relevant songs the 'mahatmiyam' in lucid version dotting

it with subtle humour and without acerbity or abracadabra.

"Andal Kalyanam" on the following day was equally absorbing, the familiarity of the subject adding to knowledgeable participation.

Among the other programmes held during the quarter, mention must be made of the local talents who registered well in various recitals. Geetha Raja, a vocalist of the Brinda school, showed her prowess in the style and her steady progress at a recital for the Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Ghatkopar during August. Her voice has a sweet ring and steady solidity that make modulation easier. And she sings with a relish in the vilamba that does her credit.

Suja Sundaram—C. A.

Suja Sundaram, a Chartered accountant is certainly a rising artist on the local musical scene. She has a thin melodious voice which modulates well to give a tempered expression of music. And her repertoire is varied considering the number of composers she covered in her major recital under the auspices of the Bhulabhai Memorial Institute, early August. She should make a mark by expanding her expressive raga vision, giving them a solid structuring in vocal depth and designs and handling niraval with indepth understanding.

P. S. Murthy, an all rounder, versatile vocalist, melodious Harmonist-revealed yet another facet of his talent, as a mridangist. Vaikom Gopalakrishnan, an established name in Bombay, added his mite on ghatam.

The Musicians' Roll Call of Honour

Padma Bhushan Dr. V. Doreswami Iyengar

The Madras Music Academy has chosen Padmabhushan Dr. V. Doreswami Iyengar, the eminent Vainika from Karnataka, to preside over its 58th annual conference and festival. Dr. Pinakapani, the eminent musician of Andhra, presided with great distinction over the previous year's conference and shed lustre on the event. It is now the turn of a Karnataka musician to illumine and grace the unique proceedings of the internationally well known Music Academy. In her message, Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi last year termed the Academy's annual festival "as an important cultural event for the country". There can be no better choice than that of that doyen of Vainikas from Karnataka, Dr. V. Doreswami Iyengar. Erudite, elegant and effacing, Sri Iyengar's musical credo is one of total and devout sincerity, while as an artist, he is entirely unassuming.

Born on 11th August 1920 at Gaddavalli in Hassan District of Karnataka, Sri Iyengar is heir to a fine Veena tradition. His father, Venkatesa Iyengar, was Vainika and flautist. He was first trained by his father and later by Mysore Asthana Vidwan, Vainikapraveena Venkatagiriappa, himself a disciple of Vainika Sikhamani Veena Seshanna of hallowed memory. Doreswami Iyengar made his debut before the Maharaja of Mysore in 1932. Thereafter, he has given recitals all over India. In 1952, he was the first vainika to broad-

cast on the national programme on A.I.R. In 1955, he joined the A.I.R. and was Producer till he retired in 1980. Many striking musical features have been produced by him such as "Post-Tyagaraja composers of Carnatic music" (highly popular); "Sangita Bharathi" dealing with the theme of unity in diversity in Indian music. (The latter won a prize in the A.I.R. competitions). With the late Chowdiah, the great violin master of yesteryears, Doreswami Iyengar took part in a number of duets. He has participated in *jugalbandhis* with Hindustani instrumentalists. He has also given numerous lecture demonstrations in prestigious music festivals and conferences like those of the Madras Music Academy, the Gayana Samaja, Bangalore etc.

Naturally, honours have sought Sri Iyengar. He bagged the Central Sangit Natak Academy Award and the Karnataka State Award in 1921. Doctorate (honoris causa) was conferred on him by the Mysore University. The Bangalore Gayana Samaja conferred the title "Sangita Kala Ratna" on him in 1976 when he presided over the annual conference. The Government of India conferred "Padma Bhushan" on him in 1983. Sri Iyengar's services to music include Chairmanship of the Council of Experts of the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat. He is also the President of the Karnataka Sangita Nritya Academy.

Sri Doreswami Iyengar has just left on a 6-week tour of the cities of London, Cambridge, Oxford, Nottingham, Leicester and Glasgow on the invitation of the U.K. University Circuit, for participating in a few workshops in some Universities, besides lectures, T. V. programmes and concerts. Mr. A. V. Anand, Mridangist, has accompanied him on the tour.

In fine, Sri Doreswami Iyengar is an outstanding representative of the Carnatic tradition and the music culture of Karnataka. The Music Academy, Madras, is only honouring itself by its choice of Sri

Iyengar to preside over the 58th conference and music festival (1984) and is incidentally upholding its status as an all-India body.

"Shanmukha" offers its hearty felicitations to Vidwan Sri Doreswami Iyengar on this milestone in his artistic career. The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha feels especially proud of the honour done to Sri Iyengar. It spotted his talent much earlier than others and featured him in its famous festivals as far back as the 'sixties (before the Hall was built).

Padma Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman

The Tamil Isai Sangam has done itself proud with the announcement that the violin maestro, Padma Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman, will preside over their annual conference and music festival this year and receive the accolade "Isai Perarignar". This title, significantly enough, implies high musical wisdom which even Jayaraman's enemies cannot deny him credit for.

A sense of destiny has guided and shaped his musical career. He has been more ready than most to discover the "mysterious redemptive powers of art" (George Steiner) by his continuous and unflagging search for all that is truly great and inspiring in Carnatic music, with Spartan discipline. Sri Jayaraman's complete immersion in the art of the violin has enabled him to seek and exploit not only his own versatility but a boundless variety of artistic forms, his mastery of the lapidary

style of playing, his clan for creativity (evidenced in his fascinating raga alapanas, varnams and thillanas) and the importance given by him to artistic vision over mere convention. In fact, he is 100 per cent perfectionist. He might agree with that great film creator, Alfred Hitchcock that "Form does not merely embellish content but creates it." A great art critic has opined that "All works of art in time acquire an autonomous force of being" and Lalgudi's musical achievements may have already acquired that 'force'. He has never been known to waste a supreme occasion (being always imbued with what Mathew Arnold termed "high seriousness") and one may anticipate his inaugural address at the Tamil Isai Sangam's conference to be eminently thought-laden. Meanwhile, our heartiest felicitations to Sri Jayaraman.

Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman

With a rare freedom from the constraints of convention, the Indian Fine Arts Society has chosen Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman, the ace mridangist, to preside over its annual conference and festival this year. After the late Palghat Mani Iyer presided over the annual conference of the Music Academy, this is the only other instance of a percussionist presiding over a conference. Both by training and by personal accomplishments, Sri Sivaraman is highly qualified to receive this signal honour and to do justice to it.

Although quite a prodigy in his early years, Sivaraman did not start his performing career till his training was complete and his percussive instincts flowered. His father Dr. Kasi Viswanatha Iyer, a perfectionist if ever there was one, apparently subscribed to the dictum that "knowledge and timber should not be used until they are well seasoned". Sivaraman had ample training under various gurus like Arbadi Natesa Iyer, Thanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer, Rangu Iyengar, and

Palghat Mani Iyer. He probably owes his researching tendencies to Vaidyanatha Iyer who (praise be to the Lord) stimulated the habit of original thinking in all his pupils. Like Palghat Mani Iyer, Sivaraman has brought a status to mridangam artises. He has a mind that is compact of music and rhythm, which can go beyond the dimensional world of the blue print and build palaces of sound liberated from mere leather. The knife-edge precision, the clarity and certainty of his playing and the realisation that rhythm is a matter of subtle accent, not mere quantity, adorn his percussion efforts. Blessed by God with fingers that can produce sheer melody and yet move with lightning speed and with a mind that acts like a modern camera shutter, Sri Sivaraman is an indispensable asset to any artiste. His nimble and restless mind is always in search of new vistas in music and hence his lecture demonstrations have always been highly rewarding and enjoyable. Congratulations, Sri Sivaraman.

Vidwan Sangita Bhushan M.S. Selvapillai Iyengar

The Bangalore Gayana Samaja has designated Sangitabhushanam Vidwan M. S. Selvapillai Iyengar as the President of the Music Conference to be held at Bangalore from 28th October 1984 to 4th November 1984. Sri Iyengar had his musical training first under his father, Sri Mantri Sampathkumarachar, a Sanskrit scholar and musician and later under Thanjavur N. Ramaswami Iyengar and Bidaram

Krishnappa. Thereafter he joined the college of music in the Annamalai University and had the privilege of studying under stalwarts Vidvan Sabesa Iyer, Thanjavur Ponniah Pillai and Tiger Varadachariar. He joined the Akashwani, Mysore as staff artist during 1942 and retired in 1975. He has trained many musicians. Our congratulations to Sri Selvapillai Iyengar on the honour that awaits him.

Cultural Scene in Karnataka

BY

T. B. NARASIMHACHAR

In the midst of a surfeit of music programmes of a routine nature and standard that marked the Sri Rama Navami festival season, the cultural shift was towards Dance-Bharathanatyam in particular. The initiative was taken by NUPURA, a dance school of five years' standing, run by Guru Lalitha Srinivasan. The five-day dance festival arranged at the Chowdiah Memorial hall and the Gokhale Institute of Public affairs (academic sessions only) featured the well-known as also the not-so-well-known dancers of different styles. It was aptly labelled 'Nitya Nritya', what with the morning academic sessions being followed by dance programmes in the evening, by juniors and seniors; local and from outside the state. Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam, Lalitha Srinivasan, Nirmala Manjunath, B. Bhanumathi, Parul Jhaveri Sastri (all Bharathanatyam), Kathakali by Kalamandalam Karunakaran and party, Bhama Kalaapam, Kuchipudi dance-drama by Dr. Vedantam Satyanarayana Sharma, Yakshagana by Dharmasthala Mandali and a Kathak ballet 'Amir Khusroo' by the members of the Natya Institute of Choreography, New Delhi, under the direction of Smt Maya Rao, these were the rich and varied fare presented in the evenings.

Dance and its Dimensions

On the academic side, there were lecture-demonstrations in the mornings, which proved highly informative, illustrative and

educative. Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao gave a brilliant analysis on the concept of Nataraja in Indian dance. Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam gave a lecture-demonstration on 'new dimensions in Indian dance.' While Dr. Satyanarayana spoke about the contribution of Karnataka to Indian dance, Mrs Lalitha Srinivasan spoke about dance sculptures and H. R. Kesavamurthi spoke about folk dances. Dr. K. Venkata-lakshamma gave a lecture demonstration on the Abhinayam prevalent in old Mysore state. Smt. Kalanidhi Narayanan (Madras) pleaded that there was no need to mix up Natya with Nataka. Dr. Vedantam Satyanarayana spoke on and demonstrated the Kuchipudi technique of Abhinaya. Pandit Viswanathan of the Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal library spoke on "Dance before the Tanjore Quartet." Sunil Kothari, an authority on Bharathanatyam and an author of many books on the subject, spoke about 'Prospect and Retrospect' in Indian dance. These academic sessions were largely attended by teachers and students of dance and covered a cross-section of contemporary dance forms and were presented by specialists in the field. On the inaugural day, a Kannada translation of Bharatha's Natya Sastra written by Dr. Adya Ranga-charya was also released. The organisers deserve kudos for this successful venture, with many of the departments of Government of Karnataka affording financial assistance.

During this quarter the Indian Institute of World Culture, the Bharatheeya Vidya Bhavan and the I.C.C.R. and the Youth Writers and Artists Guild kept up their weekly programmes full of variety and affording opportunities to local talent, amateur and professional to be presented before the public. All these were being well attended because they were all of 90 minutes duration and crisply presented and kept Bangalore's considerable number of culture buffs fully occupied. They are too numerous for inclusion in this report.

Encouragement to Dance Development

Under the chairmanship of Dr. V. Dore-swamy Iyengar, the Karnataka Sangita Nritya Academy has formulated many new schemes for the development of and encouragement to dance and music in this State. As a first step four zones have been formed to cover the entire state to institute Research and Development Centres under the charge of experienced persons. For the present the Centres at Bangalore and Mysore have Mr. B. V. K. Sastri, and Dr. R. Satyanarayana as the organisers of these centres which started functioning on the 8th and 19th of August.

The Bangalore Centre started functioning in right earnest with a choreography workshop under the overall guidance of Smt. Maya Rao, the noted Kathak exponent, who is also the director of the Natya Institute of Choreography, Delhi. More than 30 young and enthusiastic dancers (including students and teachers), participated in this experiment, which lasted for about 3 weeks only. The sessions lasted from morning till evening under high pressure without any specific planning. It develop-

ed on its own course with the participants being called upon to contribute ideas. Sonar Chand of the Delhi Institute handled the course and gave it a direction. As though the participants consisted of dancers of various levels of training, the course opened a vast vista of new horizons and possibilities in the field of dance in keeping with current thinking. They were trained under different masters with set outlook and some of them appeared to be quite unprepared for the final picture that came out. From individual exhibition they had to adjust and reconcile to group work.

By and large this object was achieved as seen from the end result in the programmes entitled 'Raja Taranga' presented before the public on Sept. 1. It was in two sessions. The first part was on an experimental basis and involved something that looked like calisthenics in dance movements under the guidance of Sonar Chand. Some youngsters appeared to be not yet reconciled to it as they were giggling even during the programme. But so far as the audience was concerned it was a novel experience to witness simultaneously about more than 30 dancers-boys and girls-on the stage as in some western ballets. They had to move in a pre-set discipline in an orderly fashion with specially composed music guiding them.

The Second part consisted of a programme which was conceived to highlight the heritage of Karnataka through the centuries of their courts, pageants, war and peace. The opening item was a Jalakannika nritya (watermaiden dance) described in a Kannada literary classic. Then came the glory of Mayuravarma's court during the reign

of the Kadambas, Pulikesi of the Chalukya dynasty. Similar scenes dealing with the Rashtrakutas and Hoysala kings were presented. In the wake of the Vijayanagara monarch Krishnadevaraya, was seen the court of the Bijapur Sultan Ibrahim Adilshah and lastly Chamaraja Wodeyar, thus coming up to the 20th century. The last item enabled the famous vainikas of the Mysore court like Veena Seshanna to be visualised with a composition of that doyen. In between we witnessed the Kolattam/Dandia, some martial dances and classical and folk dances, thus providing variety in experience. It was an audio-visual delight and was witnessed by a packed house at a morning programme.

We were told that the workshop would be continued and every attempt made to retain the present participants as a group for future programmes. Of course it was conceded that there was lot of scope for improvements and better results with longer rehearsals and better equipment in costumes, etc. This was a departure

from the routine dance programmes one is used to in the name of Bharatanatyam and the change was bound to come sometime or the other with the impact of western ideas. The diehards of the older generation were found murmuring that at any cost old values and forms should not be sacrificed at the altar of innovation and our time honoured dance traditions should be kept intact.

The Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Art Centre availed of the presence in India of the mridangam maestro Tiruchi Sankaran and had arranged a lecture-demonstration by him on the art of mridangam with special reference to the style associated with his Guru, the great master, late Palani Subrahmanya Pillay. Sankaran, who is keeping in touch with his fans in India through annual visits was profusely congratulated on the award of the title 'Sangita Choodamani' by the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras recently. To those practitioners of mridangam of the younger generation as also young Rasikas, the programme was highly educative, and informative.



Letter from Kerala

By

S. NATARAJAN

A Colourful "Onam"

The cultural scene in Kerala witnessed intense activity during the last quarter, especially in September, with the advent of "Onam". For the last three years, the Government of Kerala have been giving a brilliant lead in celebrating this important regional festival in a befitting manner. This year also the Government arranged for colourful public programmes in all the district headquarters of the State. Special mention has to be made of the State-sponsored celebrations in the cities of Trivandrum, Cochin, Trichur and Kozhikode; the dazzling illumination arranged at the famous Malampuzha dam site near Palghat; the country-boat races in Aranmula and Ambalappuzha and the carnival at the Kovalam tourist resort. Every facility was provided for the tourists and scores of them—Indian and foreign—visited these places and participated in the festivals. If the State Government maintains this standard, there is every possibility of the annual Onam festival becoming a main tourist attraction of the south like the Dusserah celebrations of Mysore.

The week-long festivities commenced on the 3rd September 1984. At the capital city of Trivandrum, it was really difficult for the citizens to pick and choose a particular pro-

gramme from the grand fare provided simultaneously at twelve different venues. On all these days the city used to wake up to the rich and sonorous rhythm of Pancha Vadyom (the unique percussion ensemble of Kerala) presented by master artists in the field brought from the Trichur and Palghat districts. It was a rare sight for Trivandrum to see scores of caparisoned elephants swinging their ears in sympathetic response to the rhythm of panchavadyom, the high light of the Trichur Pooram festival. The ancient and rich folk heritage of Kerala, presented through the colourful and gigantic "Theyyams" of north Malabar down to the "Kakkarisi Natakam" of the south, were elegantly presented on all the days. The neighbouring states of Tamilnadu and Karnataka also sincerely co-operated by sponsoring their choice folk troupes to Trivandrum during the week.

Music and Dance

In collaboration with the Sri Swati Tirunal Sangeeta Sabha, six delightful music concerts were arranged at the Karthika Thirunal Theatre. Violin performances of T. N. Krishnan, Kunnakudi Vaidhyanathan and Vocal concerts of Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan, Radha and Jayalekshmy, Prof. Omanakutty and Palai Ramachandran constituted the music fare during the week.

The Tagore theatre was resplendent with the dancing bells of Sonal Mansingh (Kuchipudi), Bharati Shivaji (Mohiniattom) and the local troupe of Kalamandalom Vimala Menon (Bharata Natyom). The Kathakali lovers were given a special treat in a different auditorium by doyens of the art on all these days. The University Senate Hall had been the attraction of theatre lovers as choice professional drama troupes vied with one another in exhibiting their talents. Crowds of children thronged the Nisagandhi auditorium every evening where outstanding children's films were screened. For adults, too, the Kerala Film Development Corporation arranged the screening of the best Malayalam films at the Tagore Theatre.

At Trivandrum, Cochin and Kozhikode the celebrations culminated in a grand procession in which huge floats, in rich pomp and tasteful style, depicting episodes from the glorious historical and cultural heritage of Kerala, sponsored by the different State Government departments and public undertakings, were taken out through the main streets. Thousands of boys and girls in colourful uniforms marched along to the accompaniment of music and rhythm.

The Concert Scene

The aswadakas of Trivandrum owe a big debt to the Sri Swati Tirunal Sangeeta Sabha for the richness and variety of the concerts offered to them every month. On 5th June 1984, the Sabha honoured the memory of the greatest percussionist of Carnatic music, viz. Palghat Mani Iyer, by celebrating Mani Iyer Day. After the commemoration address delivered by Shri Subramoniam, Station Director of All India

Radio, Trivandrum, a Veena duet concert was presented by Veena Maestro K.S. Narayana Swamy and his disciple, the brilliant Vainika R. Venkitaraman of A.I.R., Trivandrum, with able mridangom support provided by Prof. Mavelikara Velukutty Nair. Again, after three days the members of the Sabha were offered a delightful vocal concert by T. V. Gopalakrishnan to the violin accompaniment of M. S. Gopalakrishnan. T. V. G. delineated Mohanam with a rare mastery. T. V. Vasam on the Mridangom and T. V. Radhakrishnan on the Ghatom gave able support to the concert. On 22nd June, the young couple Sheikh Mehboob Subhani and Kali Shahi Subhani delighted the public with a grand Nadaswaram performance, lasting for more than three hours.

The Sabha's July programme opened with a brilliant Bharatanatyam recital of Anuratha Jagannathan. The favourite disciple and accompanying vocalist of Smt. M.L. Vasanthakumari, Meena Subramoniam of Coimbatore, gave a fine performance to the accompaniment of Kovai Balasubramoniam (violin) and Kovai Mony (Mridangam) the next week. On the last day of the month, the Sabha offered a Sitar recital of Dr. Janardhanam of Trivandrum to the Tabla accompaniment of Manohar Keskar of Bombay.

Saxophone

Four outstanding performances were presented by the Sabha during the month of August with an auspicious start by D K. Pattammal. She was given vocal support by her daughter-in-law Lalitha Sivakumar (daughter of the late Palghat Mani Iyer). The high quality of this concert owed

much to the able and exquisite violin support from Dwaram Managathayaru and the Mridangam accompaniment of Thanjai Ramadas. In collaboration with the All India Radio, Trivandrum station, the Sabha celebrated the Independence Day by presenting Saxophone concert of Kadri Gopalnath. To Kadri, who has mastered this difficult western wind instrument, goes the entire credit for adapting the same to the exacting requirements of classical Carnatic music, especially in his lucid, spontaneous and masterly employment of gamakas. Through his concerted efforts, he has raised saxophone to the status of a classical Carnatic instrument. It was really a rare treat to the audience, to listen to his brilliant delineation of the raga Kalyani followed by the rendering of the famous Swati Tirunal Composition "PANKAJA LOCHANA".

The vocal concert presented by Trippunithura Lalitha (Professor in Trippunithura Music Academy) on the 24th August was of a high standard. The violin support provided by young Babu Narayanan, a disciple of Lalgudi and the son of Mridangam doyen Prof. Velukutty Nair contributed a great deal for this. The concluding performance of the month was offered by Bangalore M.S. Sheela. Blessed with an exquisite 'Sārira' which could easily traverse all the octaves with ease and grace, she entertained the rasikas with an outstanding performance of three hours. The violin accompaniment provided by Seshegiri Rao was not up to the same standard. The mridangom accompaniment provided by A.V. Anand was good.

The Kathakali Scene

There are two well-established forums for the Kathakali lovers in the capital city.

viz. Drisyavedi and the Trivandrum Kathakali Club. The month of August provided a rare treat to the Kathakali lovers by both these organizations, 'Drisyavedi' presented NALA CHARITOM (4th Day)—the masterpiece of the doyen in Kathakali literature Unnayi Warriar—presenting Kalamandalom Gopi in the role of "Nala" and Kottakkal Sivaraman as Damayanti. Gopi, an exquisite master of his art, could very well bring out all the pathos of the hero who is placed in the most tragical and equally ironical situation due to a conspiracy of circumstances. He took his audience to the rapturous heights of perfect "Bavabhinaya". Sivaraman depicting "Damayanti" proved himself to be an equal to Gopi's "Nala" infusing into his role the required charm and grace. His acting was also superb. The music was provided by Kalamandalom Sankaran Embranthiri and Haridas. Those two artists are very good singers who can evoke the apt "Bhava" of the different situations with their variety of rendering the "Sopana Sangeetam". But the real Kathakali aswadakas are a bit worried to note the enthusiasm of Embranthiri during the recent days to imitate the Carnatic rendering style in his singing which, it is felt, adversely affects the total effect of the performance.

The Trivandrum Kathakali Club presented "Santhanagopalam", one of the most popular Kathakali plays. The episode taken from Bhagavata is well-known to all. Padmasri Kalamandalom Krishnan Nair, the greatest living Kathakali artist, presented the grief-stricken Brahmin in all his pathos. Shri Kalamandalom Gopi's Arjuna and Kalamandalom Ramachandran in the roles of Lord Krishna and Margi Vijayan as the

wife of the Brahmin gave a good account of themselves.

The Soorya Wave

The music and dance lovers of Trivandrum are now eagerly awaiting the annual "Soorya" dance and music festival which will last for ten days from 1st October 1984.

The "Soorya" Film and Stage society which was started in Trivandrum by a team of devoted youngsters with the main objective of screening classy Indian and foreign films as well as presenting standard stage plays to its members, has established itself on very firm grounds now. The membership of this society, which has almost become a status symbol among the art lovers of Trivandrum, numbers about 2500 which is perhaps unique in the country for such a society. Almost all the eminent directors, actors and actresses of the Indian film world have accepted the invitation of Soorya and participated in its functions.

For the last three years "Soorya" has entered into the world music and dance also

by organizing a 10-day dance and music festival commencing from 1st October, which happens to be the International Music Day. This year also Soorya is going in a big way for its festival. Eminent dancers like Vijayanthimala (Bharata Natyam), Birju Maharaja (Kathak), Chithra Visweswaran (Bharata Natyam), Swapna Sundari (Kuchipudi), Malavika Sarukkai (Odissi) will be presenting programmes. Dr. Balamurali Krishna and K. J. Jesudas will be giving the Carnatic vocal concerts. Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki will be rendering a Hindustani vocal concert exclusively on Maharaja Swati Tirunal's compositions. There will be a Bansi recital of Hariprasad Chowrasya as well.

The biggest attraction of this festival will be a "Jugal bandi" concert on the concluding day presented by the two great doyens—Ustad Amjad Ali Khan (Sarod) and Lalgudi Jayaraman (violin)—of the Hindustani and Carnatic school of music. These concerts will be presented at one of the very nice and capacious auditoria in Trivandrum viz. the University Senate Hall.



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க்ருதி

ஸ்ரீ குருப்யோ நம:

ராகம். கோபிகாவஸந்தம்—தாளம் ஆதி 1களை.

(ஸ்ரீ. முத்துஸ்வாமி தீக்ஷிதர்.)

பல்லி.

புராலக்ருஷ்ணம் புரவாயாமி

புலராமாநுஜம் வஸுதேவஜம் || பால =

அனுபல்லி.

நீலமேகுகூர்தரம் ஸ்துதிபாத்ரம்

நித்யானந்தநந்தம் முகுந்தம் || பால ||

சரணம்.

கமலலோசனம் கர்மமோசனம்

கபட கோபிகாவஸந்தம்

அமரராச்சித சரணம் புவதரணம்

அர்ஜுனஸாரதிம் கருணாநிதிம்.

மத்யம காலம்.

மமதாரஹிதம் குருகுஹவிஹிதம்

மாத்ருவம் ஸத்யபுரமாதவம்

கமலேசம் கோகுலப்ரவேசம்

கம்ஸபுத்ருஜனம் புக்தரத்ருஜனம் || பால ||

கோபிகா வஸந்த ராகலக்ஷணம்.

ஆரோஹணம்: ஸரி கம பத பஸ் நீஸ்

அவரோஹணம்: ஸ்நிதம பதப மகரி மகஸ.

20வது மேளமான நடபைரவியில் ஜன்யமான இந்த ராகத் திற்கு ஆரோஹணத்தில் தைவதம் நிஷாதம் வக்ரம் அவரோஹணத்தில் நிஷபம் வக்ரம். இந்த ராகம் ப்ரசாரத்தில் இல்லாத ப்ரசாரமான ராகங்களில் ஒன்றாகும். கீர்த்தனத்தில் வரும் ப்ரயோகங்களை அனுஸரித்துப்பாட வேண்டும். ரிமக/ஸா. பநித/மா. பஸநிஸ. இவை ராகத்திற்கு ரத்னகமானவை.

இந்தராகத்தை ஸ்ரீ. வேங்கடமகி அவர்கள் பாஷாங்க ராகமென்று கூறுகிறார். ஆனால் ஸ்ரீ. முத்துஸ்வாமி தீக்ஷிதரின் இந்தக்கீர்த்தனத்தில் உபாங்க ராகமாகவே காண்கிறது.

ஸ்ரீ குருப்யோ நம :

ஸ்ரீ முத்துஸ்வாமி தீசுழிதர்

20வது மேளம் ஜன்யம் — ராகம் கோபிகா வஸந்தம்: ஆதி தாளம் 1களை

பல்லவி

1. பா, தபா மா; , க கரி ரி மகா | , \ஸ பா ஸா ஸா | க ரிக ஸ ரி க மா ||
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3. ப ம ப த பா ம க ம பா ம க ரி ரி மகா | , |ஸ பா ஸா ஸா | க ரிக ஸ ரீ காரி க மா ||
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; க ரி / கா; - ம ரிக ஸ ரி க ம ப | ; , / த பா மா | / ப ம / ப க ரீ காரி க மா ||
பூர ரா மா . . . இ . ஜம் | வ ஸு தே; | . . . வ . ஜம் . . . || பாலக்ருஷ்ணன்

அனுபல்லவி

1. பா; பா ப நி தா . , | ம மா க ரிக ஸ | ரீ காரிக மா , ப ப ம | / பா; பா; ||
நீ ல மே க, கூர் . . . | த்ரம் . . . ஸ் துதி | பா த்ரம் ||
2. பா; பா ப நி தா . , | ம மா க ரிக ஸ | ரீ காரிக மா , ப ப ம | / பா; ஸா; ||
நீ ல மே க, கூர் . . . | த்ரம் . . . ஸ் துதி | பா த்ரம் ||
; பா ஸா ; - நி த தா \ மா மக ரீ | க ம ரி ரிக ஸ பா | க ரிக ஸ ரீ காரிக மா ||
நி த்யா ன ந்தீ . கந், | . . . \ த்ரம் மு | கு . . . ந்த்யம் . . . || பாலக்ருஷ்ணம்

சரணம்

1. ; = கககாரீ - கமா, கரி ரி மகா; | /ஸா ப ஸ ஸா கரி | க ஸ ரீ க மா, ||
க ம ல லோ . . . ச . னம் . . . | . . . கர் . மமோ | . . . ச னம் . . . ||
2. ; = கககாரிக - மாபம கரி ரி மகா; | /ஸா ப ஸ ஸா கரி | க ஸ ரீ க மா, ||
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தொகுத்தவர் : ஸங்கீத கலாநிதி Dr. செம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீவிவாஸயர்

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Edited by K. S. Mahadevan, Printed and Published by R. V. Murthy for
Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400 022.
Printed at Rajan & Co. Printers, 1, Goomes Street, Madras-600 001.
Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India No. R. N. 27938/75.